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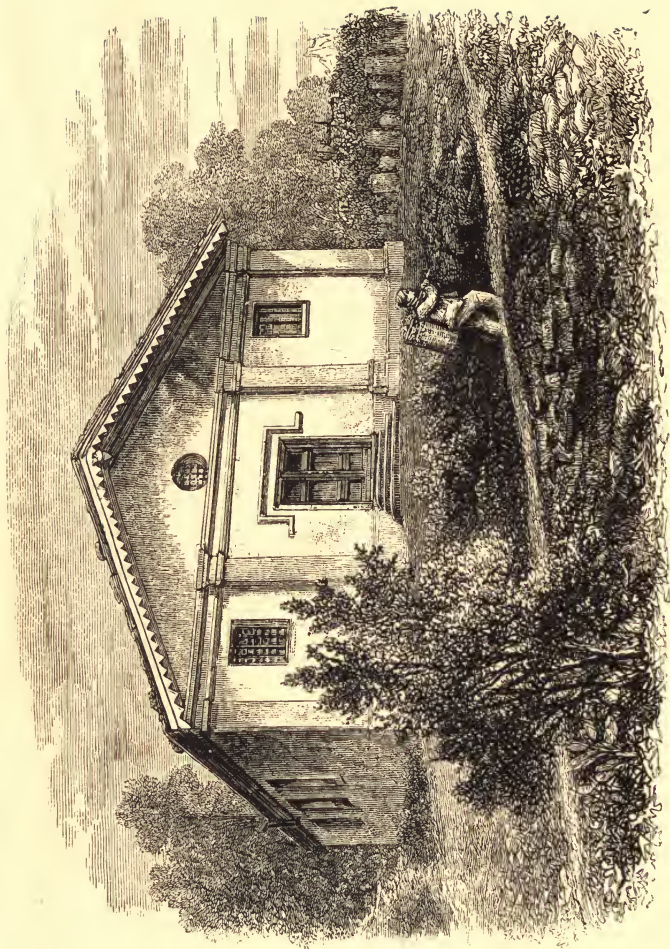


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June, 1924.







CHURCH OF CIABAS, THE OLDEST WALDENSIAN CHURCH.

See p. 129.



THE
WALDENSIAN CHURCH
IN THE
VALLEYS OF PIEDMONT,

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE PRESENT TIME.

BY THE LATE JANE LOUISA WILLYAMS.

1903 27.

14. 7. 24.

A New and revised Edition, with a view of the present state of the Waldensian Church, and of its Missions in Italy.

EDITED BY MRS. MATHESON.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,

56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
164, PICCADILLY.

"LUX LUCET IN TENEBRIS."

Motto of the Waldensian Church.



PREFATORY NOTE.



THE former Edition of this *Short History*, published in 1854, was introduced to the public by the well-known and devoted author of *Waldensian Researches*, the late Rev. W. S. Gilly, D.D., Canon of Durham. His Preface deals in part with a state of things which the lapse of five-and-twenty years has materially changed, and need not here be reproduced. A few sentences only may be given: "I cannot but express my satisfaction," writes Dr. Gilly, "that the tale of the Waldenses, for whom I have entertained the deepest concern for more than thirty years, should now be told in a brief, succinct, and popular form, likely to attract the notice of general readers. Every addition to the series illustrative of the History of the Waldensian Church, whether it be in the way of critical remark, of theological discussion, of narrative, or of poetry, is a fresh indication of the public feeling in its favour; and, more than this, the interest which is now taken by Protestant Christians of every name in the destiny of the Vaudois of Piedmont may be regarded as a proof that they are believed to have been especial objects of Divine Providence, from their earliest mention in history to the present time."

The interest of which Dr. Gilly speaks was to no small extent quickened and extended by the publication of the present work; but in some measure it passed away as other events claimed the attention of the general public; and, though for some the cause had an undying interest, the demand for books on the subject almost entirely ceased.

The beloved and revered author of the present work felt a natural and keen disappointment that a second edition of it was never called for; but she committed the matter to the Lord, for whose sake she had laboured.

A few months since, a suggestion reached her that her book should be published by the Religious Tract Society; she joyfully welcomed the proposal as an answer to prayer. At the advanced age of ninety-one, though in good health, and her intellect clear as ever, she was unable to prepare the pages for the press, or to make the additions necessary to complete the history to the present date, and she thankfully consigned the work to others. Before the task could be fulfilled, however, the message came to call her home, an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom was given to her, and she passed triumphantly away, cheered by the assurance that God, faithful to His promise, had not forgotten her work of faith and labour of love.

J. E. M.



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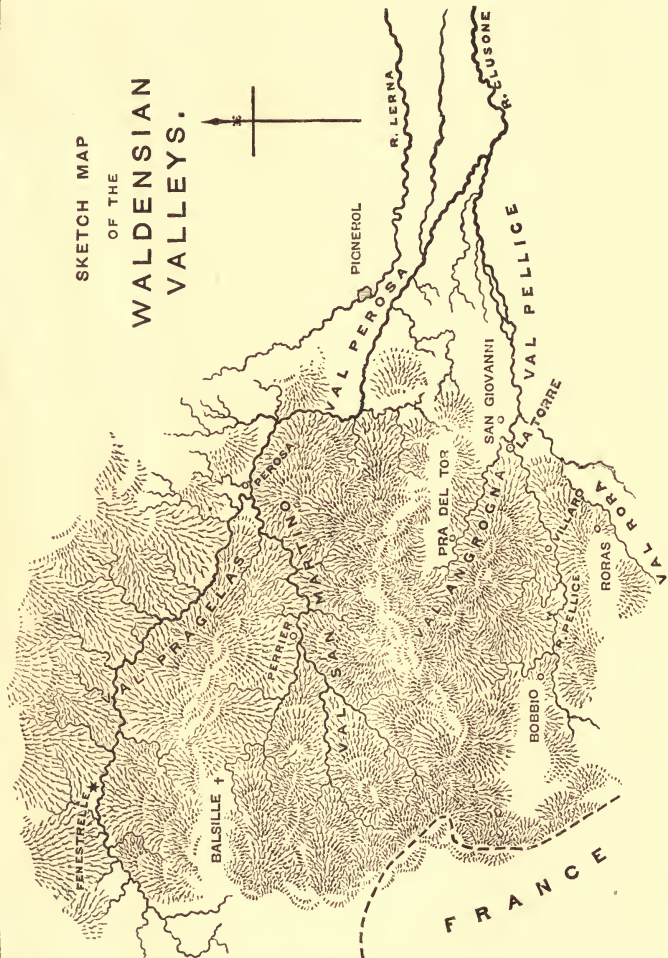
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SKETCH MAP
OF THE
WALDENSIAN
VALLEYS.





INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

COUNTRY OF THE WALDENSES—ITS CLIMATE, PRODUCTIONS,
AND THE CHARACTER OF ITS INHABITANTS.



O read the history of a country, without having first become acquainted with its geographical position and local characteristics, is something like travelling through it in a railway carriage. Cities, rivers, and battle-fields pass by us in bewildering rapidity, and the memory retains little else than the names which are repeated at every station of temporary halt.

Speed and distance, however, not being the object of *our* ambition, which is to form intelligent, rather than extensive travellers, we shall commence our history of the Waldensian Church¹ with a short account of the Vaudois country—such preparatory information being especially needed where,

¹ It is necessary to distinguish the Vaudois or Waldensians of the Italian Alps from the people of the Pays de Vaud in Switzerland, and from the French Vaudois of the Hautes Alpes.

as in the locality we would describe, the aspect of nature is so illustrative of the events with which it is associated.

Few travellers can explore these Alpine mountains, or thread the narrow defiles of their struggling torrents, without perceiving how wonderfully the magnificent theatre is adapted to the scenes of heroism and suffering which have been acted on it. Surely, all who visit this country must acknowledge with its native historian,¹ that "the Eternal, our God who has destined it as the theatre of His wonders, and the asylum of His ark, has astonishingly and naturally fortified it," and that no other could offer such facilities for defence and retreat—or, alas, for cruelty and outrage; and what else for centuries was the lot of this faithful and persecuted people!

But let it not occasion surprise to our young or less informed readers, to learn that this land of faithful witnesses and high destiny, occupies no political position, amid the nations of Europe—that it has no navigable rivers, no golden mines, no commerce or wealth; since it is the will of the Almighty thus to choose "the weak things of the world to confound the wise." What unassisted eye, even in the clearest night of frosty winter, can discern, amid the thousand suns that burn on high, such inferior planets as that on which man has his habitation? Yet to redeem one of the least of these, the Son of God expired on the cross. And thus, in her lowliness and her sufferings, has He ever owned and supported His little Church in the valleys of Piedmont—and thus, if her people fall not away from the faith so long maintained by their forefathers, He will continue to uphold her until He exchanges her martyr palm for a crown of imperishable glory.

¹ Léger.

Let us now spread open the map of Europe, and search diligently amid the lower range of the Cottian Alps for the rocky dwelling-place of "the men of the valleys." We shall find it on the Italian side of the giant wall which rises between France and Italy. Their territory, though once of wider extent, including the valleys of the Clusone and Pragela, and stretching into the plain, is now shut within the three narrow valleys of Luserna, or Pellice,—with its two branches Angrogna and Rorà,—San Martino, and Perosa. It is about twenty miles in length, and not more than eighteen in its broadest parts, and contains about twenty-two thousand inhabitants.

It is bounded on the north and south by Monte Viso and Mont Genève, on the west by the Cols de Julien and La Croix, and on the east by the fertile plains of Piedmont; these last, with the rocky eminence of Mount Cavour in the centre, and the ocean-like vapour with which they are usually overspread, add a beautiful but deceptive finish to the view.

The scenery of these Waldensian valleys possesses features both of Swiss and Italian beauty. Amongst the former, we may class the snowy points of the distant mountains, the nearer and overhanging rocks, the clear streams, and bright herbage; whilst to Italy belong the twice-budding mulberry tree, yielding its crop of summer foliage to supply growth and strength to the silk-worms, that weave those countless multitudes of golden cocoons which are the chief riches of the Vaudois peasant. The gadding vine, too, is Italian, for here, neither clipped nor trammelled, it twines its branches round trees planted at intervals for its support, and meets in graceful festoons in the centre, hanging its pendent fruit over a soil yielding rich crops of maize and waving corn

The brilliant hues of the skies, and the bright fireflies, are all Italian, and so is the soft relaxing climate, which, whilst it inspires an ardent longing to breathe the mountain air, incapacitates the traveller for the exertion necessary to scale paths, for the most part too steep and rugged even for the sure-footed mule. The native historian, Léger, speaks with natural warmth of the productions of his country—of its majestic eagles, its wild goats, and mountain chamois, the hunting of which is still pursued with avidity, and the flesh eaten with relish. We have often met the returning hunting party, and seen the once beautiful creature laid lifeless across the successful huntsman's shoulder. Of the flower-hunt we can better share the historian's enthusiasm, and join *con amore* in his admiration of the beauty of these Vaudois blossoms, although we have not tested the wonderful medicinal and meteorological properties which he affirms they possess. It has not, for instance, been *our* good fortune to find a certain thistle which he warrants to be "a delicious food and ravishing sweetmeat, an infallible barometer, and excellent antidote to the plague!"

The Vaudois cling with affectionate tenacity to their native soil, even where it is barest and bleakest, and the mountaineer is to be found on the most uninviting heights earning a scanty and precarious livelihood, content if his rood of ground and his summer toil furnish him and his family with a frugal subsistence. In the higher latitudes, unable to procure a sufficiency of fuel, the inhabitants live under the same roof with their cattle—this animal warmth during the severity of an Alpine winter alone enabling them to support the extreme cold of these mountain regions.

The population of the valleys is between twenty and twenty-five thousand. Twenty hours would suffice a good

walker to make the tour of the three valleys ; yet within these narrow limits the law confined the Vaudois until 1848 ; since then all Italy is theirs. The vale of Luserna is open and warm, that of San Martino cold and barren, whilst the valley of Perosa partakes of the nature of both.

The cultivation of the fields, including rye, barley, oats, potatoes, cabbage, turnips, French beans, and hemp, and also the care of cattle, is nearly all the occupation of the Vaudois in the mountain parishes ; on the lower ground, where the vine, maize, and mulberry tree are found, wine and the cocoons of the silk-worm employ their chief labours. This applies, however, only to the summer ; the winter, in proportion as one ascends, is of five, six, or even eight months' duration, and during this time the women assemble to spin, but there is very little to be done out of doors. The manufactures are nothing ; there are silk factories, indeed, but these do not employ the Waldenses so much as strangers who have been attracted to the valleys by them ; there are many drawbacks in them, and they are not conducive to health or morals. A number of the young people quit the valleys, where there is not space enough to find employment for them, and go to various parts of the Continent, and to Great Britain, where the young women are valued in the nursery and the school-room.

Though there has been a great improvement in the outward condition of the Vaudois during the last thirty years, their habitations are still miserable enough ; and diseases consequent on imperfect nourishment are sometimes prevalent ; while the visitor is often distressed by the frequent sight of goitre, even among young women whose appearance otherwise would be most pleasing.

The state of the Vaudois is not now so much like their

music, of the "*ton mineur et pitoyable*," as formerly, but there is still something to be done to add to their comfort and prosperity.

The establishment of the orphanage¹ has had an excellent influence spiritually and socially; for the number of orphans is great, and many are brought under the valuable teaching and training of Mdlle. Marie Sircoulon. There is a hospital at Torre Pellice, due to the exertions of Madame Geymet, who, in spite of discouragements, determined to pursue the plan she had formed, saying, "An acorn is not an oak; I will plant one in the earth; and God, who giveth growth to the oak, will prosper my undertaking." And Madame Geymet's acorn, with God's blessing, did become a sheltering tree for the afflicted Waldenses, who still find healing in its leaves. The hospital was for many years the object of great attention and sacrifices on the part of General Beckwith. A second has been established at Pomaret, not quite so large as that at Torre Pellice.²

There is some provision for the poor in each parish, and gifts are annually received from Holland for the same object.

It might naturally be supposed that such a life of toil, such fare, such lodging would sink the man to the level of the beast with whom he herds; but it is not so. Whether it be owing to an elevation of mind induced by the nobler features of nature around, to their isolated situation, or to the purity of their belief, nowhere will you meet with kindlier manners or more gentle breeding. Be it on the highest mountain or in the most sequestered vale, the traveller is sure of safety and of welcome. Should he be

¹ By English friends.

² Called in French *La Tour*; in Italian, *Torre Pellice*, *i.e.* *La Torre* in *Val Pellice*, as the valley of *Luserna* is now called.

inclined for further acquaintanceship, he will meet all alike ready to welcome him into their cabins or to guide him on his way. He will find the inhabitants of this remote solitude by no means inferior to the rest of the civilized world in general intelligence; whilst their peculiar situation, and the long endurance of oppression to which they have been inured, give a sad but interesting colouring to their conversation as it respects their present prospects. But mention the deeds of their forefathers, talk of all they endured and effected, and the eye of the Vaudois peasant will kindle, and he will expatiate, in all the eloquence of his southern tongue, on their heroic constancy and the holy cause for which they fought. But though it must be conceded that it is difficult to rouse them to express an equal interest in what concerns the present or the future, let not this apparent apathy either discourage or displease those who would seek to benefit them. Let the traveller, even though he be of the energetic race of the Anglo-Saxon, call to mind how long the Vaudois has been chained and trampled on—that he lives as it were in the cemetery of his martyred race, “where there is not a rock that is not a monument, not a meadow that has not seen an execution, not a village that does not register its martyrs.”¹

“I dare not read the history of our persecutions and oppressions,” said a lady of La Torre to the writer; “it would make me hate our enemies; and our religion teaches us to love and pray for them.”

Neither are the men of the valleys behind in their appreciation of the value of education; on the contrary, they set an excellent example in the sacrifices they often make to

¹ Muston.

obtain it. We could tell our English school-boys, who are sent to their studies with every luxury that tender parents and ingenious friends can purchase, of the efforts made and the hardships endured to secure this highly-prized advantage. We know those who are ornaments to their pastoral and literary professions, whose studies have been carried on under such severe bodily privation and bodily exertion, as would crush the energies of a common mind, and damp the ardour of a less determined aspiration. We reckon amongst our own friends those who, in the midst of academic courses, have been obliged to bear on their shoulders, down the steep mountain side, a daily load of fagots for sale in the valley beneath, panting from pain and exhaustion as they bowed under the oppressive load. We have known those, too, who, despatched in the early morning from their Alpine cabin with one slice of bread, and that a liberal share of the family provision, have gained a portion of the richer students' luxuries of *saucissons* or apples by assisting them in their exercises. Nor are the sacrifices of the parents less self-denying. To procure the advantages of education for their sons, they sometimes sell their little farms in the distant valleys—a patrimony as highly valued by them and as nobly ancestral, judged by the worth of the possessors, as the domain of a Howard—and remove into the vicinity of La Torre, for the advantage of the valuable educational institution for which their earnest thanks are due to Dr. Gilly, who, with General Beckwith, founded it in 1828. The theological department of this college was removed to Florence in 1860 ; but as a Grammar School the institution is doing an excellent work, preparing those who may be found suitable to carry on their studies with a view to pastoral or missionary labour.



STREET OF A WALDENSIAN VILLAGE.



CHAPTER I.

The Early Waldensian Church.

ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE WALDENSIAN CHURCH—

BIOGRAPHY OF CLAUDE, ARCHBISHOP OF TURIN.

ALTHOUGH the origin of the Waldensian Church has long occupied the attention of the learned, like all distant objects, it still remains in partial obscurity, and consequently gives rise to some difference of opinion. But where writers of equal power and respectability disagree, deference and notice are due to the opinions of each ; and as neither controversy nor criticism comes within the limits of this little work, instead of presuming to guide by any opinions of our own, we will endeavour to lay before our readers a sketch of the leading views respecting the origin of the Vaudois or Waldensian Church, put forth in the writings of authors of unquestioned eminence and authority.

But to do even this clearly and with the requisite conciseness, demanded much previous investigation and careful

arrangement ; and the better to secure the confidence of our readers, we will explain to them that our studies were carried out under such favourable circumstances as procured us not only access to the best authors and MSS., but a personal acquaintance with the country and its inhabitants. In short, like the “busy bee,” we have felt it to be our bounden duty, as it was our chief delight, to hasten abroad in the early morning and to work diligently through the long summer day ; and having thus collected our store, like her to spare neither time nor effort in moulding it into symmetry and usefulness.

There are two strongly contested opinions respecting the antiquity and derivation of this Church in the Wilderness. It is maintained on one side, that she has preserved her apostolic descent, intact and separate, from the earliest age of Christianity to the present time, without any mixture with other churches, and in total exemption from the errors which have clouded the faith of her Christian sisters. On this side we have the opinion of many eminent writers on prophecy, who point out the Vaudois church as the Western Witness ; and also the unwilling testimony of several Roman Catholic authors, who record the tradition that the “heresy,” as they term it, “existed in these valleys from all antiquity.”¹ The Vaudois themselves maintained, in all their appeals made at various times to their sovereigns, that the religion they followed had been preserved from father to son, and from generation to generation, “from all time, and from time immemorial.”² Most of their historians support the same opinion. “The Vaudois of the Alps,” writes one of the latest, “are, according to our belief, the primitive Christians,

¹ Claude Seyssyl, etc., etc.

² “Da ogni tempo, e da tempo immemorabile.”

and heirs of the primitive Church, preserved in these valleys secure from the alterations introduced successively by the Roman Catholics into the evangelical faith.”¹ Beza pronounces them to be “the seed of the pure Christian Church,—being those who have been appointed by the wonderful providence of God, whom none of the storms by which the world has been shaken, nor persecution, have been able to prevail on to yield a voluntary submission to Roman tyranny and idolatry.” An English historian observes, “With the dawn of history we discover some simple Christians in the valleys of the Alps, where they still exist under the ancient name of the Vaudois, who by the light of the New Testament saw the extraordinary contrast between the purity of primitive times and the vices of the gorgeous hierarchy which surrounded them.”² The late Rev. Dr. Gilly, than whom no one could have a better right to speak on the subject, in his Preface to the former Edition of the present work, observes: “Whether the Protestant inhabitants of the valleys on each side of the Alps, between the great mountain ranges of Mount Cenis and Mount Viso, can be proved by documentary evidence to derive their Christianity from primitive times or not, this is certain, that from very remote periods there has been a *Christianity* in this region, different from that of Rome, in the dark, mediæval, and modern ages; and this has been handed down to the present era by a succession of martyrs and confessors, and of other faithful men. The faith and discipline of these Alpine Christians may, at times, have been more or less true to the gospel rule; but their creed and church government have always contained articles

¹ Muston's *Israel des Alpes*.

² Sir J. Mackintosh.

opposed to the pretensions and errors of Rome, as far as we can judge from documents that can be traced up to the fourth century at least. If, therefore, we find truth and evangelical holiness among the Waldenses of Piedmont, when other professors of the gospel in different ages and places went wrong, in the fourth century for example, and again in the ninth and eleventh, in the twelfth and thirteenth, and in the sixteenth century—if we can take epochs at random, and still find vestiges of the pure gospel at the foot of the Cottian Alps, long before the Reformation—we may conclude that the gospel was transmitted, and preserved among them, from primitive times. It is surely more probable that the “men of the valleys,” shepherds and husbandmen, should *retain* the truth, as it was first delivered to them, than that they should be able to *discover it* amidst the darkness of the twelfth century, when all Christendom was departing farther and farther from the light, under the false teaching of subtle schoolmen, and ambitious and licentious hierarchs.

“At such a remote period did our Piedmontese valleys exhibit the stamp of early evangelization.”

We need not multiply authorities, or nothing would be more easy; but we cannot refrain from adding that of one who will not be accused of partiality towards any form of Christianity: “It is an extraordinary fact,” observes Voltaire, after affirming the antiquity of the Vaudois Church as the remains of the first Christians of Gaul, “that these men, almost unknown to the rest of the world, should constantly have persevered, *from time immemorial*, in usages which have been changed everywhere else.”¹

¹ *Additions à l'histoire générale.* 12mo. pp. 57-71.

We will now say a few words on the opinions of the other party on this contested point, who, whilst bearing an equally favourable testimony to the purity and fidelity of the Vaudois Church, assign her a more recent origin, maintaining that she received both her faith and her appellation from the merchant Reformer of Lyons, Peter Waldo, of whom we shall speak hereafter. They, too, quote from the Roman Catholic writers. Allian de l'Île, or de Lille, who lived at the end of the twelfth century, speaks of the Vaudois as "wolves in sheep's clothing, called Valdenses, from the name of their leader, Valdus." Pierre de Vaus-Cernay, an author known at the beginning of the thirteenth century, styles them, "the heretics called Valdenses, after the name of one Valdus of Lyons." And a few of the more modern historians take the same side, considering it a sufficient honour for the Vaudois Church "to be descended from a simple layman of Lyons, whose piety, moderation, and courage may serve us for a perpetual example, and to have brought out the truths of the Gospel three ages before the Reformation, as well as to have preserved it since that time amid sufferings and privation."¹ And high praise it undoubtedly is; but we must not therefore omit to state the objections raised against this view of the subject, even by those who equally esteem the intrepid Reformer of Lyons. Again we refer to our opponents—for instance, to the bull of Pope Urban II., which sets forth that the Vaudois had been "infected with heresy from the year 1096," long before the birth of Peter Waldo. We may also again quote the assertion of Pierre de Vaus-Cernay, who in his laudatory history of Simon de Montfort, observes, that "this great Defender of the Faith especially signalized himself in his extermination

¹ *Israel des Alpes*, p. 22.

of that pernicious heresy which already, in the year 1017, had raised its head in Orleans." We might greatly multiply our quotations on this head also, but must proceed to give the objections raised to this derivation of the Vaudois Church on other grounds. It is pleaded that the followers of Peter Waldo are usually termed the "poor men of Lyons," and not Waldenses—that "the appellation of *Val-lense* or *Valdesi* in Italian, *Vaudois* in French, and *Waldenses* in English ecclesiastical history, means neither more nor less than 'men of the valleys ;' "¹ and further, as surnames were not then in use (men deriving their individual designation from some place or circumstance connected with their history), that it is more probable that Peter himself gained his appellation of *Waldo*, or *Valdo*, from his adoption of the principles of the Waldensian Church.

A third view of the history of this isolated Church, somewhat modified from that of the first, as explained above, seems to gain ground in the opinion of those most interested and best read in the subject. We will give a short summary of it, extracted from the pages of a modern periodical,² in which it is very ably sustained.

It is assumed by the author that the Vaudois, who, as we have already stated, once inhabited a much larger extent of territory than they now possess, formed a portion of the primitive Christian Church planted in Italy, and remained attached to the same as long as she herself continued true to her original faith. There are abundant proofs given in yet existing manuscripts of the long fidelity to the Bible, and constant protestation against encroaching error, of the bishops of Milan and Turin, commencing as early as the fourth century, and continuing still unsilenced in the

¹ Dr. Gilly's *Waldensian Researches*.

² *Buona Novella*, Turin.

ninth. St. Ambrose, the illustrious Bishop of Milan, who died A.D. 397, was styled, amongst other titles,¹ “the Rock of the Church,” and well deserved the appellation from the sound divinity of his writings, his intense reverence for Scripture, and his steady opposition to idolatrous innovation. Many more names of faithful prelates (among their number that of Philastrius, Bishop of Brescia, and of his successor, Guadentius), with a succession of protesting witnesses, are preserved in the pages of the learned, and in the time-worn MSS. of the continental libraries; but we can only transfer into our little work a short biographical notice of one, in some respects, the most eminent amongst them—the justly celebrated Claude, Archbishop of Turin.

It is the general opinion of the Vaudois historians, that the connection of their Church with the Episcopal Church of Italy ceased soon after the death of this distinguished man. “It was not,” writes one of the latest, “the Vaudois who separated from Catholicism, but Catholicism which separated from them, by modifying the primitive faith.”²

Angilbert, Bishop of Milan, writing of the terrible and growing corruptions of the Church to the Emperor Louis I., remarks with exultation, that “in his diocese the goodness of God had raised up a true Christian champion,” referring to the excellent Claude. This truly apostolic overseer of the flock of Christ was born in Spain towards the end of the eighth century. Though early exposed to the temptations of a court, yet, by God’s blessing on the excellent

¹ “Virtutum episcopum, arcem fidei, oratorem catholicum.” Allix on the *Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, 8vo, p. 15.

² *Israel des Alpes*, ii. p. 11.

instruction of Felix, Bishop of Urgel, of whom he was a disciple, he withstood them all, and gained the confidence of his royal master, Louis, surnamed the Débonnaire. Whilst in the comparatively humble situation of one of the court chaplains, the young divine displayed great talents for preaching, and the same fearless defence of truth as characterised his more matured ministry. "I teach no new doctrine," he replied to those who termed the tenets of the Bible heresy, "but I keep myself to the pure truth; and I will persist in opposing to the uttermost all superstitions." When his royal master became Emperor of Germany, he immediately appointed Claude to the bishopric of Turin, adding to it the title of Archbishop. Here his first object was to destroy the images, which had gained a recent entrance into the churches, and then to abolish every ceremony that he considered incompatible with the simplicity of apostolic teaching. And thus, unmoved by the temptations of ambition as he had been by the seductions of pleasure, Claude continued to combat error, to oppose innovation, and to keep the Church committed to him free from the idolatrous rites and anti-Christian dogmas which were, even then, sapping the foundations of the apostolic faith.

How delightful it must have been to the little flock on the mountains to range themselves under the protecting crook of this faithful shepherd! for the Vaudois are essentially a submissive and loyal people, yielding a ready obedience to authority, and looking on their duty to their rulers as only secondary to that they owe to the laws of their God. In the year 815, this indefatigable servant of God wrote three books on Genesis, and a commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel; in the following year, another on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians; and in subsequent periods, treatises on

other parts of the sacred volume, at the especial request of the emperor, who desired to have a commentary from the same pen on each of the epistles. There are yet found mss. of Claude's on various subjects; but his commentary on the Galatians is the only one that has been printed, and of this—such has been the zeal of the Inquisition in its destruction—scarcely one copy remains.

Job exclaims, in the ardour of self-extenuation, "O that mine enemy had written a book!" Our good bishop might well have expressed the same wish, for it is a curious fact, that fragments of the work so sedulously destroyed have been preserved in the manuscripts of his opponent and former friend, Jonas of Orleans. We will give one or two extracts, to prove that the Church of Rome was only then beginning to admit the errors which have since so thickly crowded on her. On the vital one of Transubstantiation, which our apostolic bishop combats throughout all his writings, he observes: "The bread is the representative of Christ's mystical body—the wine the symbol of His blood." On the worship of images he asks, "Why adore images? but here is what the miserable sectarians say, 'It is in memory of the Saviour that we worship and adore the painted cross erected to His honour.' Nothing pleases them in our Lord but what delighted even the impious—the opprobrium of His passion, and the ignominy of His death; looking always at the agony of His passion without heeding the words of the apostle, 'Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him no more (thus).'" Again the bishop remarks, "If men are commanded not to adore and serve the works of God's hands, there is much stronger reason for not serving and adoring the works of men's hands," etc. And then, in honest scorn,

he bids them “adore the cradle, the manger, the ship,” etc., etc., adding, “But ah! this is ridiculous, and we would much rather lament it than write it; but we are obliged to answer fools according to their folly, and to hurl against hearts of stone, not the darts and missiles of the word, but darts of steel. . . . God commands one thing, these men another. God commands to bear the cross, not to adore it. These persons would adore it, while they bear it neither corporeally nor spiritually. To serve God in this manner is to forsake Him.”

This excellent man continued his written attacks on the growing errors of the Church until 823, and his courage and integrity knew no abatement until his death sixteen years after. Although his doctrines were attacked, nothing could lessen the honour and esteem in which he was held. He had a large party at the court who lived in separation from the Church of Rome; whilst the decision of the Council of Frankfort against the worship of images, A.D. 794, when the great Charlemagne was present, as well as that of Paris, A.D. 826, to the same effect, prove that at that period both the presence of images in their worship, and the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, met with decided opposition.

After the death of the intrepid Claude, about the year 839, we still read of protestations made for some time by the Italian bishops against the assumptions and corruptions of the Papacy. But the voice of remonstrance grew fainter and fainter until it was entirely hushed. Ambition and luxury seduced the great ones of the earth, and the lonely Church of the Valleys became the sole witness of the West—the *enduring, not seceding Church of Christ*.

In addition to the authorities already quoted, we may bring forward the valuable testimony of a modern Piedmon-

tese historian, and a Roman Catholic, for the assumption that the separation of the two churches took place not long subsequently to the death of Claude. "This Bishop of Turin," writes the Marquis Costa de Beauregard,¹ "a man of eloquence and austere manners, had a great number of partisans. These persons, anathematized by the Pope, and persecuted by the lay princes, were chased from the open country, and forced to take refuge in the mountains, where they have kept their ground from that time, always checked, but always endeavouring to extend themselves." And there they have remained, a line of protesting witnesses, verifying their own significant motto, "*LUX LUCET IN TENEBRIS*;" their lamp throwing its bright though shaded light through the gloom of the Middle Ages. Thus, as the Roman Church apostatized, the Vaudois Church was developed—as the bishops seceded, the *barbes*² came forward.

Is, then, the Vaudois Church of Episcopalian or Presbyterian origin? The question has been often canvassed; for each denomination has claimed her, and each with some reason. If the proofs of her apostolic antiquity be admitted, it must also be conceded that she was early gathered, and long remained under the guidance of the bishops of Italy; and that the separation did not take place until after the death of Claude, Archbishop of Turin, in whose diocese the valleys of the Vaudois were comprised, and whose evangelical writings are in strict accordance with those of their Church.

The conscientious deference to authority evidenced throughout the history of the Vaudois Church, together with the silence of their early writings and ecclesiastical

¹ *Mémoires Historiques* par le Marquis Costa de Beauregard, vol. ii., p. 50.

² The name given to their pastors, signifying *uncle* in the language of the country.

documents on the peculiar tenets of the Genevan Church, must also be admitted in evidence of her ancient Episcopalian training. Still, in pursuing her after-history, we shall find her equally submissive to the rule of the Presbytery, and receiving both her form of worship and her pastors (under the pressure of very extraordinary circumstances) from that body with whose ecclesiastical polity she has now, for nearly three centuries, continued in the closest connection. The union of the two Churches has been further cemented by gratitude for the sympathy and aid which that of Geneva has ever shown towards her suffering sister, as well as by the further link of a ministry trained in her colleges; the Vaudois youth having, until the endowment of their college in their own valleys, received their education in foreign seminaries. Still, under all circumstances, it must be allowed that the little Church in the valleys submissively followed the path pointed out to them in the unmistakable leadings of Providence; and if this sometimes required them to yield in matters non-essential to salvation, they never lost the characteristics of a Christian Church, so admirably defined by their own historian and pastor¹—namely,

“A simple and sincere conformity to the sacred Word;
A holy life and conversation;
Persecution, and the cross.”

¹ Léger.



CHAPTER II.

The Teaching Church.

THE SCHOOLS AND DOCTRINE OF THE EARLY WALDENSIAN
CHURCH—BIOGRAPHY OF PETER WALDO.



PERSECUTION and the cross! Yes, we now enter on that long struggle against tyranny, and endurance of wrong; that heroic defence of truth which has no parallel in the history of any other Church or nation. We have said that as the Italian Church receded from its ancient faith, the Vaudois Church came more prominently forward in the maintenance of Christian purity. The transition from the gorgeous ritual of the hierarchy to the naked sublimity of the Pra del Tor,¹ would furnish a subject for a dissolving view of striking contrast—shall we try and paint it?

It should be at the moment of vespers, as the setting sun

¹ Or Meadow of the Turn—called in Italian, Prato del Torno, in *patois* Pra del Tor, or Pré du Tour. A sudden turn in the valley of Angrogna, brings one in sight of the meadow.

is throwing bright masses of colouring through the stained glass on the pavement of Milan Cathedral. Clouds of incense curl even to the roof, whilst a procession of priests and white-robed choristers, chanting their *Ave Marias*, wind through the "long-drawn aisles," and disappear beneath the portico of the magnificent building. We follow,



ENTRANCE TO PRA DEL TOR, VAL ANGROGNA.

and behold! a thick mist, gradually ascending from the ground, at length wraps the whole cathedral in its cold grey mantle, and shuts out the light of heaven. Suddenly the strained eye discerns the tops of lofty mountains piercing the clouds, and sharp-pointed rocks almost meeting across a foaming torrent; then, as the vapour clears away and the

scene expands, a grassy hollow is visible, scooped out as it were amid its guardian mountains.

The sun, now bursting out, illuminates the mouth of a



PRA DEL TOR—ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

deep cavern, within whose recess we discern a circle of mountain youths, their eyes earnestly fixed on the countenance of a white-haired man, who looks on them with a

father's interest, as they eagerly drink in the instruction he imparts. And soon the glorious sun has climbed high above the clear horizon, and the circle is broken up. Some of the students seek the shelter of the forest to con their sacred tasks, and some climb the heights, or search the margin of the stream for healing herbs ; but when the dew falls on the herbage, and the labour of the vine-dresser is ended, and the goat-herd has driven home his flock, we see them all cross the green hollow, and stand reverently around the holy man as he reads and explains to them God's sacred Word. The voice of prayer, sweet and solemn, is then heard in the vast wilderness—the voice of one interpreter of the wants and woes of the kneeling mountaineers ; and then the full burst of praise mingles with the roar of the descending torrent ; and again all is hushed but its brawling waters, as the Christians steal, in silence and secrecy, to their homes, trembling lest even the stars that light them on their way should betray them to their lurking foes.

But now the Vaudois pastor and his flock meet no more by stealth on the Pra del Tor. Thanks be to God, to the tolerance of their ruling princes, and to the benevolent aid of Christian friends, they have now churches in which they can meet, and a college in which they can educate the rising generation—"none making them afraid." It is truly a blessed change ; but we have a long train of persecution to unfold, ere it will find a place in our history of the Vaudois Church.

This mountain retreat, which we have described in somewhat fanciful terms, is very dear to the men of the valleys. It has well deserved their veneration, since we shall find it affording them not only a place of refuge, but a fortress of defence—at once their temple and academy, their castle and

retreat. "It was here," says their historian Muston, "in the almost inaccessible solitude of the profound gorge of Pra del Tor, where retired nature filled their souls with stern inspirations, that the *barbes* held their schools. They made their pupils learn by heart the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John, the General Epistles, and some of those of St. Paul. They exercised them in Latin, the Romaunt tongue, and the Italian. After this the young men passed some years in retirement, and were consecrated to the ministry by the laying on of hands." To the above studies other authors add that of medicine—a knowledge essentially useful in their missionary wanderings. But the principles most insisted on by these early teachers as the foundation of all their instructions, the great lesson which echoed through the rocky labyrinths of their wild academy, and which forms the essence of the *protestations* of this primitive Church, is thus summed up :

"God is the only object of worship ;
The Bible is the only rule of faith ;
Christ is the only foundation of salvation."

The character of the *barbes* is unanimously represented as being of an exalted order. They are termed the "lovers of all virtues, and enemies of all vices." That they exercised a patriarchal if not a sacerdotal influence over their flocks, this familiar appellation (*barba*, "uncle") seems to indicate ; their whole history also shows them to have been men thoroughly devoted to their duty, and quite free from worldly or ambitious views. "We receive," as they humbly express it, "our food and clothing in the way of alms, as much as is needed, from the good people whom we teach." But, like St. Paul, they worked with their own

hands, and applied themselves to some useful handicraft or art—principally to that of healing. They were, for the most part, unmarried; not from deeming the state of wedlock forbidden, or otherwise undesirable than as a bar to usefulness, and more especially to that life of missionary labours to which these apostles of the valleys were from their earliest ordination devoted.

The Word of God was the earliest inheritance of the Vaudois, and they clung with a holy pertinacity to all that it bade them retain, renouncing with equal integrity all that could not be proved to be in accordance with its injunctions. The Bible was their sword and shield, their fortress and defence from the face of their enemies.

Deprived for centuries of an outward church, forced to meet for worship in caves and dens of the earth, the lamp of the Word was their only light, so that, guided by its unerring beams, their feet stumbled not on the dark mountains. Thus “a familiar acquaintance with the Bible, and submission to its teachings, formed the distinctive feature of the ancient Vaudois. Nor was the investigation of the Holy Scriptures the duty and privilege of the *barbes* and their scholars only—the layman, the labourer, the artisan, the mountain cowherd, the mother of a family, nay, even the young girl whilst watching the cattle and employing her hands at the same time in spinning, studied the Bible attentively and practically.”¹

This faithful investigation of the Word of God naturally exercised a powerful influence on the writers of the ancient documents of the Vaudois Church, which are still preserved, and of which scriptural truth and scriptural simplicity are the prominent characteristics.

¹ Monastier's *Histoire de l'Eglise Vaudoise*, chap. xii.

The moderator, Léger, foreseeing, with too sure prognostic, the coming storm of 1655, collected these original manuscripts of his Church, bearing date from A.D. 1100¹ to A.D. 1230, and consigned them to the care of Sir Samuel Morland, the English ambassador, who deposited them in the library at Cambridge. Another, but smaller collection, was placed nearly at the same time by Léger himself in the public library at Geneva—a wise precaution, since, by some unaccountable carelessness or fraud, a considerable number of the Cambridge deposit are missing. These mss. are for the most part in the Romaunt tongue, a corruption of which is the popular language of the valleys, and are written with considerable accuracy, and even elegance.

But the glory of the Vaudois literature is their “Noble Lesson,” a poem of considerable power and of pure evangelical sentiment, sufficiently explanatory of the horror these ancient Christians entertained of the doctrine of Mariolatry and saint worship, of the supremacy of the Pope, the idolatry of the mass, and other falsehoods of Papal invention. Besides a copy of this poem, still remaining, we believe, in the Dublin collection, we have seen a very perfect one in the Geneva library, laid up with the autographs and manuscripts of the celebrated Reformers, ecclesiastical and political, of the sixteenth century—a jewel in an appropriate casket.

The poem opens with an exhortation to repentance, founded on the belief prevalent amongst the early Christians, that after the Gospel had been preached a thousand years, Satan would be loosed, and the end of the world draw nigh (Rev. xx. 7). This refers the work to the latter part of the eleventh century (a date, indeed, expressly specified), and

¹ This date is questioned.

forms another proof, to add to those already brought forward, of the antecendence of the Vaudois Church to the birth of Peter Waldo.

“ Oh, brethren, hear a noble lesson,
 We ought always to watch and pray,
 For we see this world is near its end.
 We ought to be earnest in doing good works,
 For we see this world is coming to an end.
 Eleven hundred years are already accomplished
 Since it was written. For we are in the last time.”

The poem is too long for copying, but we will add a few lines, taken from another part, to prove how early the Vaudois Christians were exposed to persecution, as well as in evidence of the morality of their lives.

“ If there be any one who loves and fears Jesus Christ,
 Who will not curse, nor swear, nor lie,
 Nor be unchaste, nor kill, nor take what is another's,
 Nor take vengeance on his enemies,
 They say that he is a *Vaudès*, and worthy of punishment.”

It should be noticed that the word *Vaudès* means, in the Romaic, a sorcerer ; and some authors¹ refer the appellation of the men of the valleys (Vaudois) to this opprobrious epithet, bestowed on the early Christians by their Popish as well as pagan adversaries.

We must now endeavour to give a brief summary of the belief of the Vaudois Church, as it was and is (which in all essential tenets harmonizes with that of other evangelical Christians), as extracted from their ancient documents, and quoted by their ablest historians. They believed in one God, —Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ; that Christ is Life, Truth, Peace, Righteousness, Shepherd and Advocate, Sacrifice and Priest ; that He died for the salvation of all believers, and

¹ See Monastier, chap. vii.

rose again for their justification. They acknowledged no purgatory, calling it a "dream of Antichrist," and admitted but two sacraments—Baptism and the Eucharist. "Sacraments," they aver, "are signs, or visible forms of invisible graces; good, but not essential to salvation." They subscribed to all the articles of the Apostles' Creed, and received the Athanasian Creed, and the decisions of the first four Councils.

Their morality was very severe; they denounced taverns as "the fountains of sin, and schools of the devil, where he works miracles of his own kind;" and forbade dancing, "as a procession and pageant of the evil spirit." "In the dance," say they, "God's ten commandments are broken; the hearts of men are intoxicated with earthly joy; they forget God, they utter nothing but falsehood and folly, and abandon themselves to pride and concupiscence." As may be supposed, the instruction of youth formed a part of their code, as well as the duties of children to their parents; and in fraternal and ecclesiastical discipline, the commands of the apostle were strictly enforced and obeyed.

Such, then, though imperfectly explained by our short summary, were the admirable doctrines and regulations of the Vaudois Church, even amid the darkness of mediæval error. Let us now inquire what was their influence on the life and conversation of her children. We are content on this, as on former occasions, to abide by the testimony of their enemies,—and surely amongst the bitterest we may class Claude Seyssel, who, whilst at the head of the persecuting Propaganda, attests,¹ "that as to their life and manners they were irreproachable among men, applying themselves

¹ Léger, pt. 1, p. 184. *Storia d' Italia di Carlo Botta*. Paris, 1832, pp. 369, 370, as quoted by Monastier.

with all their power to the observance of the commandments of God." St. Bernard, compelled, in spite of his hatred of their "heresy," to acknowledge the purity of their lives, charges even this on them as the acting of falsehood. "If you ask"—such are his remarkable words—"What is their faith? nothing is more Christian; if you ask, What is their manner of life? nothing is more irreproachable." The testimony of the Inquisitor Rainier reminds us of the forced acknowledgment of the possessed. "The heretics," he writes, "may be known by their manners and their language, for they are well ordered and modest in their manners; they avoid pride in their dress, the materials of which are neither expensive nor mean. They live by their labour as artisans; their men of learning are likewise mechanics. They do not amass wealth, but content themselves with what is necessary. They are chaste, and temperate in eating and drinking. They do not frequent taverns and dances, and are not addicted to other vanities—they labour constantly—they study and teach. They may be known by their concise and modest discourse, in which they guard against indulging in jesting, slander, and profanity."

Such a testimony from the pen of their enemy and active persecutor, induces us to echo the confession of the good king Louis XII., when a similar one was brought to him of his Vaudois subjects of Val Louise: "These *heretics* are better Christians than we." It is in truth a lovely picture—why should it be a *dissolving* one? We trust it is not—and quote in confirmation of that hope, and our own experience, the testimony of a modern writer, who, in referring to the present Vaudois community, remarks, "Indeed, the Vaudois, be it the result of their religion, their poverty, their meekness, or the persecutions to which they have been

subjected, have preserved great integrity of manners ; and it cannot be said that they threw off the reins of authority in order to yield to the impetuosity of the passions."

We now proceed to the teaching of the Vaudois on another and equally important subject—namely, on the ceremonies and rites of their Church.

They admitted infant baptism, as they still continue to do, and the administration of the Lord's Supper in both kinds, deeming it essential that each rite should be administered by an ordained minister.

With regard to ordination, "it was their custom from the earliest period on record," says the historian Gilly, "for the *barbes* or pastors to assemble in synod once a year, in the month of September, when they examined and admitted to the holy ministry such students as appeared qualified, and also named those who were to travel to distant churches." From the same authority we learn that in later times "they held assemblies from all parts of Europe where Vaudois churches were established." As many as one hundred and forty pastors were thus assembled in the valley of the Clusone on one celebrated occasion.

The bull of John XXII. declares : "It has come to our ears, that in the valleys of Luserna, Perosa, etc., the Waldenses, heretics, have increased so as to form frequent assemblies in a kind of chapter, in which they meet to the number of five hundred." This bull was issued at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

We are not told of the precise manner in which the ordination was conducted by the early *barbes*, beyond the simple fact that it was performed by the laying on of hands ; but as the customs of the Vaudois are, as those of the Medes and Persians, little given to change, it may interest our readers

to have an account of an ordination which took place at La Torre, in the autumn of 1853. The examination of the candidates, five in number, was held in the college, in the presence of the entire body of clergy, presided over by the "Table," or executive government. The peculiar circumstances of the times, the important field of missionary labour open to the candidates, and the personal interest connected with the history of one in particular, who had come out of the Roman Catholic Church, in which he had held an influential position, deepened the interest, and protracted the examination beyond the customary limits.¹

The synod sat for many consecutive days, during which each candidate was examined separately and scrupulously—on his belief, on his religious convictions, and on the motives which induced him to desire ordination in the Vaudois Church. The answers were duly registered, and copies of the whole proceedings of the assembly forwarded to the different churches and academies in connection with those of the valleys.

The examination of this year was on the three points—justification by faith, the Divine authority of the Bible, and the constitution and principles of the Vaudois Church. At the end of the examination, the result being satisfactory, a separate text was given to each student, who in turn preached a sermon on it, in the church of La Torre. We were privileged to be present in one of the very large congregations then assembled. They seemed in outward appearance little changed since the days when their forefathers worshipped amid the rocky fastnesses of the Pra del Tor. On one side of the spacious new church were ranged the women, clad uniformly in the simple costume of the country, with their

¹ See p. 263.

white caps and dark-coloured gowns; whilst the opposite benches were occupied by the men, all apparently listening with deep interest to the preacher, and joining in the prayers and psalmody with heart as well as voice.

No doubt, many hearts beat, as those more nearly connected with them appeared for the first time in this responsible situation; and there were yet deeper feelings excited as the Christian beheld, in these young and ardent men, missionaries who were destined to "sow the Italian field" with the precious grain of the Word of God, and to go forth again as their fathers of old, shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and with offers of salvation to the descendants of their bitterest foes.

The imposition of hands took place fifteen days after the examination and initiatory sermons. The ceremony was simple. The moderator commenced it by a sermon on the duties of the candidates, who were ranged beneath him, surrounded by the pastors. At the termination of his discourse, he descended from the pulpit and laid his hand on each of their heads as they knelt before him, the ministers extending theirs at the same time over them; and the ceremony was concluded by a general fraternal embrace.

We now return to the early missionaries of Pra del Tor, from whom, as we recall the scene we have described, we seem scarcely to have parted, so similar in spirit are some of the young and ardent men just consecrated to the work. Amongst the many important services of the Teaching Church were translations made by the *barbes*, copies of which were multiplied by their scholars and distributed amongst their flock. Nor was the circulation confined to their valleys; in their frequent missionary journeys they

threw far and wide the precious seed; and it will be seen at the great harvest with what result.

The subject recalls another eminent labourer in the same field, another evangelical translator, whose name has already been traced on these pages—the Merchant Reformer, Peter Waldo.

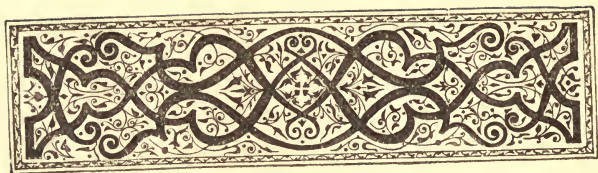
Perhaps a little notice of “the poor man of Lyons” may serve as one of our promised bouquets to scent and embellish our chapter of the Teaching Church, and add life to its lessons.

But Peter was not always “the poor man of Lyons”—he did not always wear that garment of coarse frieze, nor walk with sandalled foot along the highways, calling on all men “to repent and come out of the abominations of the Great Babylon.” We know of one day when the wealthy merchant was arrayed in purple and fine linen, and sat conspicuously at a feast. There were luxurious viands on the board, and the wine cup went freely round; and the tabor and harp were there; and there, too, was the rich man’s chosen friend, the companion of all his pastimes, as young and thoughtless as himself. We are not told under what form death appeared to the friend of Peter Waldo; all we know is, that the grim tyrant seized him as he sat at the festal board. Like the companion of another great Reformer, he was struck dead at his friend’s side; and the effect on both survivors was the same—a sudden and solemn conviction of the necessity of repentance, and an unalterable determination, from that awful moment, to give themselves up to the service of God. Luther, we know, retired to a monastery for study and meditation—Waldo remained *in* the world, but not *of* it. He sold his lands and houses, parted with his luxurious furniture, and gave all his fortune to charitable and evange-

lizing purposes. He also devoted himself to the study of the Bible, and, some affirm, translated the Gospels into the vulgar tongue; at all events, he gave the people this inestimable boon, and caused the intelligible Word of God to be widely circulated amongst them. Many of his followers, who, in imitation of their leader, gave up their all and went about in humble guise preaching the gospel, were styled "the poor men of Lyons," which at length became the general appellation of this rapidly increasing sect. The amazing success which attended their efforts, the truly apostolic life of Peter and his disciples, soon drew on them the anathema of the Pope, and the violent persecution of the Archbishop of Lyons. Waldo made his escape into Picardy, where he had many co-religionists, and then crossed the Alps with some of his followers to find a welcome in Piedmont. Once more he returned, to escort other aliens to the same place of shelter; and then this eminent Reformer retired, about 1182, with a number of his followers from the same locality, into Bohemia, where he finished his distinguished career about the year 1197, leaving behind him a vast number of disciples, converts from the Romish Church, who, scattered far and wide by the storms of persecution, settled in various countries, carrying with them the precious truths of the Gospel of Christ.

Thus the tempest which uproots the parent tree bears the seed on its wing, until, scattered over the moistened earth, it springs up and covers with fertility the hitherto unproductive soil.





CHAPTER III.

The Missionary Church.

MISSIONARY BARBES, PEDLARS, AND MINSTRELS—HISTORY
OF THE PROTESTANTS OF FAVALE.



WE have now to enter on a wider field ; to quit the sequestered valleys of Piedmont, and accompany the Vaudois missionary over a large portion of Southern Europe. It might be imagined that the struggling Church had enough to do to provide for her own spiritual wants ; but no, we find her from the earliest period laying aside a part of her scanty means to minister to the more urgent necessities of others. We find her sending forth her wisest and most hopeful on missions, although aware that danger and death tracked their steps.

Her pastors went, like the first disciples, two and two, the elder to guide the more youthful ; who, after his probationary

retreat and subsequent ordination, was usually despatched on a mission of two years' duration.

The path of these mountain missionaries lay of old over some of the most romantic and classic ground in the world,—paths trodden by the conquerors of the earth, and hallowed by apostolic feet. One of the most poetic of the Vaudois historians¹ has graphically described the route of the pilgrims, and the welcome they met at each well-known resting-place. Through their instrumentality the hidden ones of the Lord were to be found on many an olive-clad slope, beneath many a vine-embowered roof; on the Alpine snows, and in the fertile glade,—nay, even in the marble palaces of Genoa, and amid the seven hills of Papal Rome, there were thousands who no longer bowed the knee to Baal.

How like angels' visits must the annual arrival of these good men have appeared,—“How beautiful on the mountains the feet of those that brought glad tidings!” There were physicians for the suffering body as well as the sin-sick soul amongst them, as there was one beloved Luke amongst the evangelists of Christ. The generality of readers, we believe, are not aware of the immense success which attended these early ministrations in the south; it is best computed by the bitter cry which echoed from every part of the Roman hierarchy against the spread of gospel truth, and the deep, deep curses invoked on the recipients, under each of the opprobrious names by which they were designated.

We tremble as we approach the period when the full malice of Satan was let out against them; and linger yet

¹ M. Muston.

amid the sweet scenes of Christian communion presented by the early missionaries and their converts.

There is nowhere a more interesting account of their progress than that furnished by one of a profession little honoured amongst us, but from whose writings we have already made some extracts—the Inquisitor Reinerus Sacco. We cannot, at the same time, but acknowledge our obligation for what appears to us the very disinterested way in which he has reported arguments that so irresistibly condemn his own creed.

Our readers must be aware that the colporteurs of those days had no freight of printed and bound Bibles to bear from house to house ; all the missionary possessed were a few manuscript copies of parts of the New Testament, which he was obliged studiously to conceal, and furtively to circulate ; since the discovery of such in his possession would have subjected him to imprisonment, and probably to torture and death.

Another peculiarity of those times must also be remembered in the fact, that there were not then, as now, markets and shops at which every article of necessity and luxury could be procured. Shut up in their castles or remote villages, the ladies of those days, as well as their domestics and retainers, looked with impatience to the arrival of the traveling pedlar, whose pack generally contained the articles they most needed ; and even when the annual stock of household luxuries, purchased at the distant fairs of Frankfort, Basle, Beauvais, or other large towns, was exhausted, the traveling merchant could supply them ; but the Inquisitor shall tell his own story :

“ They ” (he is speaking of the Vaudois missionaries) “ offer for sale to people of quality, ornamental articles, such as rings and veils. After a purchase has been made, if the

pedlar is asked, 'Have you anything else to sell?' he answers, 'I have jewels more precious than these things; I would make you a present of them if you would promise not to betray me to the clergy.' Having been assured on this point, he says, 'I have a pearl so brilliant that a man by it may learn to know God; I have another so splendid that it kindles the love of God in the heart of him who possesses it;' and so forth. He speaks of pearls metaphorically; then he repeats some portion of Scripture with which he is familiar, such as that of St. Luke, 'The angel Gabriel was sent,' etc., or the words of Jesus Christ in John xiii. 'Before the feast,' etc. When he has succeeded in gaining the attention of his hearers, he passes on to that passage in Matt. xxiii. and Mark xii., 'Woe unto you that devour widows' houses,' etc.; and when asked to whom these denunciations are to be applied, he says, 'To the clergy and the religious orders.' Then the heretic compares the state of the Romish Church with his own. 'Your doctors,' he says, 'are ostentatious in their dress and manners; they love the highest seats at table (Matt. xxiii.), and desire to be called Masters, (Rabbi); but we do not seek such masters.' And again, 'They are unchaste; but each one of us has his wife, with whom we live chastely.' And again, 'They are the rich and avaricious, to whom it is said, "Woe unto you, rich men, who have here your reward;" but as for us, we are content if we have food and raiment.' And again, 'They fight, stir up wars, kill and burn the poor; we, on the contrary, endure persecution for righteousness' sake. Among them it is a rare thing to find a doctor who knows literally three consecutive chapters of the New Testament; but among us there is scarcely a woman who does not know, as well as every man, how to repeat the whole of the text in the vulgar tongue. And because we possess the true Christian faith, and all teach a

pure doctrine, and recommend a holy life, the Scribes and Pharisees persecute us to death, even as they treated Christ Himself,' etc.

"After this, or some such address, the heretic says to his hearer, 'Examine and consider which is the most perfect religion and the purest faith, whether ours or that of the Romish Church, and choose it, whichever it may be.'

"And thus, being turned from the Catholic faith by such errors," pursues this most ingenious or ingenuous *King's evidence*, "he forsakes us. A person who gives credit to such discourse, who imbibes errors of this kind, and becomes their partisan and defender, concealing the heretic in his house for many months, is initiated into all that relates to their sect." ¹

There is an interesting version of this incident from the pen of an American poet, which we insert in further illustration of the touching episode of the Pedlar Missionary.

THE VAUDOIS MISSIONARY.

"O Lady fair, these silks of mine
Are beautiful and rare;
The richest web of the Indian loom,
Which beauty's self might wear.
And these pearls are pure as thine own fair neck,
With whose radiant light they vie;
I have brought them with me a weary way:
Will my gentle Lady buy?"

And the Lady smiled on the worn old man,
Through the dark and clustering curls
That veiled her brow, as she bent to scan
His silk and glittering pearls;

¹ Reinerus, *Maxima Biblioth.* t. xxv. p. 275 and following.

And she placed their price in the old man's hand,
And lightly turned away;
But she paused at the wanderer's earnest call,
"My gentle Lady, stay!

"O Lady fair, I have yet a gem
Which purer lustre flings
Than the diamond's flash of the jewelled crown
On the lofty brow of kings;
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price,
Whose virtue shall not decay;
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee,
And a blessing on thy way!"

The Lady glanced at the mirroring steel
Where her youthful form was seen;
Where her eyes shone clear and her dark locks waved
Their clasping pearls between:
"Bring forth thy pearl of exceeding worth,
Thou traveller grey and old;
Then name the price of thy precious gem,
And my pages shall count thy gold."

The cloud went off from the pilgrim's brow,
As a small and meagre book,
Unchased with gold or diamond gem,
From his folding robe he took;
"Here, Lady fair, is the pearl of price;
May it prove as such to thee—
Nay, keep thy gold, I ask it not,
For the Word of God is free."

The hoary traveller went his way;
But the gift he left behind
Hath had its pure and perfect work
On that high-born maiden's mind.
And she hath turned from the pride of sin
To the lowliness of truth,
And given her contrite heart to God
In the beautiful hour of youth."

But such were not always the happy results of the missionary's labours ; even where the lord and lady of the castle favoured and protected him, there were found those of their household base or weak enough to denounce him to the priest. How often, when their two years of destined wanderings had expired, must the poor men of the valleys have looked in vain for the return of their venerated pastor and his young disciple ! They went forth in pairs ; they returned solitary, or not at all. We know not the names of the martyred multitude who perished in loathsome prisons or at the stake ; but we know, from the testimony of three of the Roman Catholic Archbishops of Aix, Arles, and Avignon, that between the years 1206 and 1228, “ so great a number of the Waldenses were apprehended that it was not only not possible to defray the charge of their nourishment, but to provide lime and stone to build prisons for them.”

This wholesale persecution did not take place, it is true, until the great slaughter-house of the Inquisition was raised, and the onslaught of the Albigensian crusade had commenced ; but persecution had long before tracked the footsteps of the Vaudois missionaries, and cruelty gloated over the tortures which were secretly inflicted on them in those dark vaults, in which they were immured, ere their mangled remains were thrown into the cold river which flowed around its walls.

Two of the most celebrated missionaries of the twelfth century were Pierre de Bruis and Henri. Although not born in the valleys of Piedmont, they scattered the Vaudois doctrines throughout France, and were the fathers of the Albigenses, having commenced their mission some years before we read of that of the “ poor men of Lyons.”

Pierre de Bruis was a priest, though of what order is not known ; his disciple Henri was called “ the false hermit,”

probably from his secluded life and abstemious habits. Their dress is represented to have been, like that of their Waldensian brethren, "of coarse grey woollen cloth, and their whole appearance to have evinced poverty and simplicity." Henri is thus described by an old writer: "He wore short hair, his beard shaved, was large in stature, but poorly clad; he walked rapidly, and went barefooted even in winter; he was affable, had a powerful voice, and lived differently from other people. His ordinary retreats were the cottages of peasants; he lived in the day-time under porticoes, ate and slept on some hill in the open air, and had acquired a great reputation for sanctity. He had natural eloquence, and a voice like thunder. He soon spread his errors in his sermons, and stirred up the people against the clergy."¹ It is seen by the close of the quotation that the Reformer's biographer was a Roman Catholic; but truly the Vaudois may be content to follow the wise man's injunction, "Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips;" for their opponents are their best panegyrists; and but for their monkish adversaries little would be known of the early evangelical teachers, besides the immense success of their labours, as proved by the multitude of their martyrs.

Amongst this glorious band, Pierre de Bruis was called to receive the crown of martyrdom at the stake of St. Gilles, in Languedoc, A.D. 1126.² Henri, after labouring some time with his master, separated, the more widely to proclaim the good news of salvation, and went first to Lausanne, and afterwards with two Italians to Mans, about the year 1110. Arriving in hermit guise, barefooted, and bearing a staff surmounted with a cross, the missionary received permission

¹ *Sketches of the Waldenses*, Religious Tract Society, p. 46.

² *Centur. Magdeb.* cent. xii. col. 832.

from the bishop to preach in the cathedral, where his discourses made so powerful an impression, that the clergy, jealous of his reputation, soon found means, notwithstanding the opposition of the people, to silence the captivating orator. After continuing his pilgrimage and his exhortations through the south of France, he was arrested at Arles by order of the archbishop, who brought him before the Council of Pavia in the year 1134; but, though condemned and imprisoned, we find the heroic man again at large, and in active combat with the most renowned champion of the Church of Rome of that period—St. Bernard, the Abbot of Clairvaux.¹

Flushed by his recent triumph over the equally celebrated Abelard, and in the full plenitude of his fame, he still thought the poor missionary a worthy object of his persecution. By his efforts, joined to those of the infamous legate, Alberic, Henri was brought before a second council, that of Rheims, in the year 1148, condemned and thrown into prison, where after his forty years of labour he entered into his rest and his reward.²

The Teaching Church of the Vaudois had yet other agents; at least, it has been conjectured that in those days, when the wandering minstrel was as frequent and as welcome a guest, both in castle and cottage, as his brother of the pack, the Vaudois missionary might avail himself also of the disguise and lute of the troubadour, and sing, not of “War’s alarms and lady’s love,” but portions of the “Nobla Leyczon,” and other Vaudois poems. An anonymous writer of the thirteenth century says positively, speaking of the Vaudois, “They have invented certain verses (measures), which they

Dupin, *Nouvelle Biblioth.*, t. ix. p. 101.

² These particulars are furnished by Monastier; see his *History* for the references, chap. vi.

call the thirty degrees of St. Augustine, in which they teach, in some manner, the practice of virtue and to avoid vice, and have adroitly introduced their rites, that they may be learned more readily and impressed on the memory." This, we own, is only presumptive evidence ; but how suitable to the taste, the habits, and even the language of the people, was this mode of disseminating a religion of harmony and love ! Still, we do not affirm, because we cannot substantiate, the existence of the missionary minstrel of former days. Here is a little history of one of a later date, for which we do vouch :

On a fine morning, in the summer of 1852, the town of La Torre, the little capital of the Vaudois, wore an unusual aspect of holiday cheerfulness. It was not the Sabbath day : but the elder women, as they sat at the doors of their houses and shops, had on their holiday gear, whilst their little children who played around them were dressed in their neatest frocks, and the young girls walked about with their fans held up to screen their ruddy faces from the sun, with eyes and cheeks as bright as the smart necklaces and kerchiefs with which they had adorned themselves. At this moment of leisure and expectation, an itinerant musician walked with somewhat weary steps into what is ambitiously called "the square," and commenced tuning, not, we fear, a lute or lyre, but a violin. But

"In sooth, our minstrel was no vulgar boy,"

and might have been, had he lived in a more poetic age, no unworthy companion for Cœur de Lion's faithful Blondell, or even unsuccessful competitor for the golden violet of the floral games of Clemence Isaure at Toulouse.

He was a young man of very pleasing deportment, gentle and modest. At first the inhabitants of La Torre paid no

attention to the stranger, but as he proceeded, after a symphony played with some taste and execution, to accompany the instrument with his voice, one or two of the passers-by stopped to listen; and by the time he had finished, many had quitted their seats at their doors to gather round, and to purchase the printed copies of his song, which were soon exhausted. The poetry does not rival that of the before-quoted American bard, but the moral is the same, and our readers may like to see a specimen of the untaught effusions of the peasant minstrel of Chiavari.

CANTICO SUL TEMPO PRESENTE

Del Buon Esempio che ha portato G. C. in questa Terra.

Nacque al mondo il Redentore

Portator di libertà;

Ma per dare a noi esempio,

Abbracciò la povertà.

Ed è nato in una grotta

Nella più cruda stagion,

E morì sopra la croce

Per la nostra redenzion.

Egli viene a dare esempio

Che se ci vogliam salvar,

Le ricchezze ed i piaceri

Noi dobbiamo abbandonar, etc., etc., etc.

It is probable that Stefano Cereghino (for that was the young musician's name), had not a second time got further than this stanza, when he saw himself deserted by his audience, who, joining in the living stream which passed through the square, left him standing alone in the middle of it; what had he to do but follow? This he did for some distance through a narrow street which opened into a wider space, admitting a view of vineyards and chestnut groves and swelling mountains, till before him rose the dark rocks of Castelluzzo. And now they pass a building from whose gates issues a procession of elders and youths; and a little

further on, upon an elevation which is gained by ascending a short flight of steps, stood a modern building of some importance, but whose simple, though handsome façade, caused our young Italian some perplexing doubts. "Could it be a church?" There was no bell, no heavy screen to shade its portals—there they stood, open to all, Stefano entered. "No, it was *not* a church, for where was the decorated altar, the image shrines, the tapers, the officiating priests and serving acolytes? There were no crossings, no genuflexions, no chantings, no censers—it could not be a church." Still, though the ministers spoke in an unknown tongue, and amid its want of all these essentials to a Romish church, the poor minstrel of Favale felt it was good to be there; and laying his violin and knapsack on the ground, he knelt down beside them. The day on which the young minstrel's steps had been directed to the Protestant valleys was one of peculiar interest—the day set apart for the dedication of the new church; and many a Christian eye and heart overflowed with grateful joy as they looked round on the numerous and attentive congregation which crowded the building, and remembered the time when their forefathers were driven to worship their God in caves and dens of the earth. Poor Stefano knew nothing of this *then*; nor could he look into the future, and see that bonds and persecutions were in store for him also; but the Spirit was even then preparing him, by His inward stirrings, for his appointed work.

The morning service of the *Temple* (the name universally applied by the Vaudois to their places of public worship) was in the French language, of which the young Italian was ignorant; but he felt the earnestness of the preacher and the emotion of his audience, as well as the sweetness and solemnity of the psalmody and prayers, and in the afternoon was the first to enter the newly dedicated house of God. We

do not attempt to describe the holy joy of the convert at hearing, for the first time, the glad tidings of peace and salvation proclaimed in the sweet accents of his native tongue ! At the close of the service he knocked at the door of one of the pastors, asking, as Christian did of the Interpreter, to be directed on his way to the heavenly kingdom, and receiving as kind a reception.

He told his tale, and with so much simplicity and truth, that the pastor listened to it for two hours, unconsciously standing the whole time, so deeply did he feel interested in its details. We, too, must tell our young pilgrim's history of his flight from "the City of Destruction;" but it must be in briefer terms than those in which Stefano dilated on his mountain home amongst the ridges of the wooded Apennines, of its soft climate and fertile soil; nor can we dwell as he did on each member of his numerous and respectable family, though we can well excuse his honest pride and the satisfaction he derived from the high estimate in which they had been held, even by the priest, as duteous children of the Church. We can excuse, too, his detailed history of a recent time of discontent and riot, when the loyal clan of the Cereghini had saved those priests from outrage, and perhaps death. Stefano described their principal calling to be that of masons; but, having gained some knowledge of music in the choir of their church, and possessing a natural taste for that, and its sister art, they occasionally went the round of the provincial towns and hamlets, singing, as we have already shown, like the minstrels of old, their own compositions. It was an unusual source from which to derive an ardent longing for the living waters; but nevertheless, Andrea, the poet of Chiavari, Stefano's cousin, having found amongst the writings of Father Liguori some texts of

Scripture, thirsted to drink at the full fountain, and applied to his priest to supply him with a Bible.

But this was scarcely to be hoped for, though the promise was made from time to time,—a promise never meant to be fulfilled. Andrea probably suspected this, and seeing one day at a little inn at Genoa a traveller engaged in reading the New Testament, he learnt where a copy was to be procured, and lost no time in getting possession of the treasure. Like the man in the parable, he called his friends and neighbours round him to rejoice with him over this recovered possession, which had been so long lost to them. This could not be hidden from the curé, who dissolved the little assembly, and prohibited the reading of the Bible. The timid neighbours, and the women of the Cereghini family, submitted to the dictum of their priest; but Andrea and his father, Giovanni, together with our young troubadour, could not thus yield up their new-found acquisition; nor, at the same time, could their conscience be at ease under the accusation of disobedience to their spiritual director. Amid these conflicting feelings, Stefano hears that there are “a people, called the Vaudois, inhabiting some distant valleys, who *read the Bible* ;” and he instantly resolves to seek this favoured country, to lay his perplexities before them, and ask their counsel. It was distant and unknown, but we have already heard that he reached it at last at a most propitious moment, and gained the advice and Christian sympathy he sought and needed.

A year passed by, and once again the “*Buon Esempio*” was sung in the square of La Torre—but this time it was Giovanni, and his younger son, Antonio, who played and sang, and dealt out the copies of the ballad, which were eagerly bought.

Never was there a finer personification of the Christian virtues than that presented by these remarkable peasants. Their commanding height and classic features, the sweetness and benignity of their countenances, the modest dignity of their manners, must have rendered them objects of interest to us, if we had not had our attention previously enlisted by the deeper attraction of their history.

In the evening, a party of Christian friends, strangers as well as natives, were invited to the house of one of the professors of the college, to hear the subsequent adventures of the Cereghini from their own lips. On leaving the valleys, Stefano informed us, he wrote to his parents the joyful account of his adventures. "We are no longer alone," he tells them; "I have found others who read and love the Bible;" and they were comforted, though they had in the meantime been sorely pressed by the curé. This gentleman had sent for Stefano's father and mother, and placing a crucifix before them, bade them swear on it never again to receive him under their roof, but to chase him from it with a parent's curse. These simple and affectionate parents recoiled at the unnatural command. "What!" exclaimed the affrighted father, "curse my child! curse him who has been our stay and our pride! Never! That religion cannot be right which would demand such an unnatural sacrifice." And the chain was for ever broken which had bound them to such a cruel superstition.

And now the priests, fearful for their craft, called in to their assistance four monks, with flowing beards and sandalled feet, who aided in various attempts of alternate threat and cajolery to move the stout Cereghini to give up their Bibles, and come to confession—but all in vain. "What, then, is to be done?" said they. "These heretics must be put down by a *coup de main*, or they will taint the whole community;" and

a procession for the ostensible purpose of appeasing the anger of their patroness, the Virgin Mary, and for the secret one of dazzling and awing the peasantry of Favale and the surrounding villages, was proclaimed, in which all ages and ranks were to walk barefooted and crowned with thorns. The former part of the costume, if we may so term it, was easily adopted, and the latter was furnished by the priests from the neighbouring thickets. On the appointed day, four thousand persons assembled, and for many miles around no one wore shoes and stockings or hats but the Cereghini. The men of the clan went to their work as usual, but the women had not yet courage to resist the orders of the priest. Maria still went to confession, still shut her ears when her brother and cousins read the Bible, and her gentle mother walked in the procession in the prescribed costume, and went afterwards to the cathedral to mass. But the priest, as she approached the altar, refused to receive her, and uttered such fearful denunciations before the whole assembled multitude, that the poor woman was borne fainting from the cathedral, never, we believe, again to enter it.

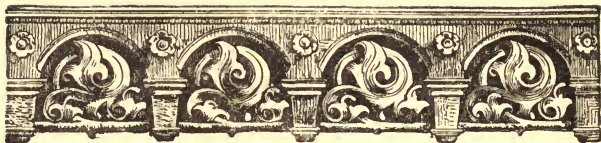
We must not dwell further on the *naïve* and touching account given by the Cereghini in their own sweet southern tongue, of the gradual opening of light, until the full day burst out in unclouded splendour. One early morning, on the 13th of November, two parties of carabineers arrived at Favale, and summoned five of the members of the Cereghini family from their beds to a prison. "Give us but a few minutes to pray once more together," said they. The request was granted; and even the rough officials were moved as they stood by the kneeling confessors, and heard their supplications for strength in this hour of trial. And strength in no stinted measure was vouchsafed. The father of the family, his heroic son, the newly-married pair,

and subsequently the young maiden who had withstood the truth longest, only to embrace it with greater fervour, were arrested, and went unmurmuringly to prison. Maria met her fate with a courage which surprised and moved all who beheld her; and this bashful girl of seventeen found arguments which silenced all who would persuade her to retract. One of the accused, Agostino, was not at home when the arrests came; but on his return, when his wife conjured him to seek some safe asylum, he comforted her by saying, "I only returned home to embrace you and our old people; our Father in heaven will take care of the rest. Teach me to fly from the wrath of God, and not from the wrath of men." He stayed only to embrace his friends, and went to Chiavari, giving himself up voluntarily to share the captivity of his relatives—their captivity, but not their prison. The family so united in Christ were separated in their bonds, and the same low artifices were separately practised on them which Rome has grown hoary in exercising. The prisoners were severally told that their companions had retracted, and when this falsehood failed, were threatened, if *they* did not, they should be burnt alive.

But, praised be God! the "prisoners of hope" are now set free; the law which immured them is abolished; and before two years had elapsed from the time that Stefano sang in the "square" of Torre Pellice, forty of the Cereghini had entered the Vaudois Church; nay, more, our Christian masons were employed, through the benevolent exertions of some English friends, in building themselves a modest "temple" at their native place, where the priests had just erected in their cathedral an immense pillar to the Virgin Mary, and placed themselves and the whole district anew under her holy keeping.

We now resume the thread of our history, leaving the story of the existing Church to be continued in our concluding chapter. We promised our younger readers to hang as many bouquets on it as we could, without interfering with the unity of a connecting thread ; perhaps there may be some who will think we have exceeded our engagement. But the history of the Christians of Favale is but a continuation of that of the Vaudois Church ; and we have introduced it as one instance amongst the many that are daily passing before our eyes, of the unchanged and unchangeable nature of Romanism. Moreover, in thus mingling our personal experience of the present with the history of the past, we are but carrying out the main object of our work, and that which sanctions, by its novelty, the addition of our slight sketches to the number of books of larger bulk and deeper research, which have been already published on the Waldenses and their Church.





CHAPTER IV.

The Colonising Church.

THE ORIGIN, PROGRESS, AND DESTRUCTION OF THE VAUDOIS
COLONIES OF APULIA AND CALABRIA—BIOGRAPHY
OF JEAN LOUIS PASCALE.



WHAT a history is that of man! Well might
the Christian poet exclaim—

My soul is sick of every day's report
Of war and outrage, with which earth is filled.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart!
It does not feel for man.

The book of history is stained from beginning to end with crime; but no page has a deeper dye than that marked with the crusade against the Albigenses. We have said that there had for successive ages been a cry throughout the hierarchy against the wide-spreading evangelisation of these people; and that numerous victims were sacrificed to its bigotry and superstition. Persecution began in the thirteenth century to assume a more organised form. "Superstition

trembled for its altars, its images, and its false miracles ; ignorance was offended with evangelical light, and wounded pride and avarice anticipated the ruin of the credit and revenues of the clergy.”¹ The Emperor Otho iv. granted to the Bishop of Turin a decree of persecution against the Vaudois, A.D. 1198 ; whilst equally severe measures were taken against the Christians in Germany, Bohemia, and Italy. But, we repeat, the most flagrant instance of cruelty and oppression was the war of extirpation waged in the fertile countries of Languedoc and Provence against those disciples of Pierre de Bruis and Henri and Peter Waldo, known by the name of the Albigenses, a designation derived from the city and territory of Albi. The history of this most heinous violation of the laws of God and man has its own narrators, and does not belong to that of the Vaudois ; but the Albigenses were so nearly related in faith and suffering, and were subsequently so blended with their Vaudois brethren on the other side of the Alps, that thus much notice of it was necessary. Moreover, the vast number of these persecuted refugees which poured into the Piedmont valleys was the cause of an important movement in those valleys, by filling them to overflowing, and inducing many of the young and enterprising to emigrate. The exact date of their first colonising settlements is not known ; but there are authentic records of the foundation of those of Calabria in the fourteenth century, from which we commence the history of the Colonising Church.

About the year 1340, two Vaudois youths were overheard, in an inn at Turin, in earnest discourse on their future prospects and proceedings. They might have got thus far on their journey in search of a new home, or probably had come to the capital in order to procure more certain information

¹ Monastier.

respecting the unknown world into which they were about to grope their way ; but, as nothing happens by chance, it was doubtless the special purpose of Heaven to direct their steps to that particular spot to which those of a Calabrian gentleman had been ordered, and to draw his attention to their eager discourse. The doubts, the fears, and the hopes of the emigrant have not yet ceased, though five centuries have rolled onwards since those Vaudois youths talked of success in some bright distant land. There are those still who can picture the shade of uncertainty which occasionally clouded their fair hopes, and the thoughts of home which dimmed those clear eyes, as they talked over obstacles to be surmounted, and parting sorrows to be endured. It seems, in the ardour of their discourse the emigrants did not notice, or at least did not heed, the stranger who sat next them, until addressed by him in the following words, “ My young friends, if you will come with me, I will give you fertile fields for your barren rocks.”

The youths returned to the valleys to report the proposition of the courteous stranger, which was received with approbation and gratitude, but not finally accepted, until the elders had dispatched, together with the young emigrants, some competent persons to spy out the promised land. Calabria, in which the Marquis of Spinello's fine possessions were situated, was pronounced by the investigators to be indeed a land of promise. It belonged to the kingdom of Naples, and forms the southern part of the peninsula of Italy. Gilles gives a vivid picture of the country, and thus describes its numerous advantages, “ There are beautiful hills,” he says, “ clothed with all kinds of fruit trees, spontaneously springing up according to their situation—in the plains, vines and chestnuts ; on the rising ground, walnuts and every fruit tree. Everywhere were seen rich arable land and few labourers.”

Thus, in addition to the produce of their own country, our Vaudois spies found the yet richer growth of this sea-girt land, where the olive stretched its grotesque boughs over the swelling hills, and the aromatic myrtle sprang from the clefts of the rock.

Many anxious hearts awaited the return of the messengers ; and truly it was no evil report that they brought of the offered settlement. “ Never,” says M. Muston—“ never before had there been seen such emotion, such searchings of hearts as now agitated the peaceful inhabitants of the valleys. The young men hastened to select fit partners to accompany them to their future homes, and the proprietors of lands to dispose of their heritage. Family gatherings were saddened by the anguish of parting, and more than one bridal train was changed into a caravan of exile. But they could say with the Hebrews, as they took their departure for the land of promise, ‘ The Tabernacle of the Almighty will go before us ;’ for they carried with them the Bible of their forefathers—that holy ark of the new covenant, and of everlasting peace.”¹

We can well believe that the elders of the people did not see without lamentation the sinews of their strength depart. We, too, can picture the crowd of loving relatives and friends who followed them to the foot of the mountains, sorrowing as though they should see their face no more ; such mournful partings are daily taking place around us. Would that the exiles of England were guided by the same patriotic views—would that they were oftener animated by the same missionary spirit as that which inspired these earlier emigrants !

The Vaudois wanderers had no seas to cross, but it took

¹ *Israel des Alpes.*

them twenty-five days of weary travel to reach their destination, and many were the hardships they endured on the way. Arrived at Calabria, they were graciously received by the lords of the soil, who granted them liberal terms, and, the spirit of the times considered, great liberty of action. They were left in undisturbed possession of their palladium, the Bible ; they had also their places of public worship in each community, as well as their own ministers. And, in further proof of the estimation in which their services were held, they were allowed civil magistrates, also chosen from their own members, to preside in secular matters ; thus completing their independence of a native population, differing from them essentially both in manners and creed. To guarantee the continuance of these valuable privileges, the Vaudois took the precaution of having an authentic document drawn up and confirmed by Ferdinand, the then King of Naples ; but what are bonds or promises made to heretics, but decoys to lead them to their ruin ? The oaths of kings are absolved by a breath of the Pope, and perjury, deceit, and crime of every dye, become virtues when glossed over with the pretence of conversion. The early history of the Vaudois settlements in Calabria, the progress of their flourishing colonies there and in Apulia, as drawn alike from Roman Catholic and Protestant sources, seem almost like a dream of the “ golden age.” They built several small towns ; the first, near Montalto, was named Borgo d’ultra Montani, in allusion to the passage of the Alps made by its inhabitants ; afterwards, aided by fresh-coming emigrants, they built San Sesto, the site of one of their celebrated churches. They founded Argentino, La Bocca, Varcarisso, and San Vincente, and finally gained so much favour in the eyes of their most powerful patron, the Marquis Spinello, as to obtain his permission to build the walled city of La Guardia, which still retains the name of

Guardia Lombardia. It is favourably situated near the sea, and rose to opulence, the inhabitants enjoying many privileges from their lord, and by their skill, their probity, and industry, amply repaying the patronage they received.

Thus rose, thus flourished, this Christian colony, amidst the depression of all around. It is well observed, that “the *civilising* influence of the gospel is proportionate to the purity in which it is received. The Vaudois Churches, flourishing in the bosom of a country full of superstition and misery, presented then the same contrast that is remarked in these our own days between Protestant and Roman Catholic countries. In proof of this, we may place enslaved Mexico by the side of the free States of America—poor, suffering Ireland beside prosperous and industrious Scotland.”¹ The fame of Vaudois industry spread afar,—other landlords invited them to settle on their estates; and their colonies extended into Apulia, where they built five small towns; these were chiefly inhabited by refugees, who fled there, from Dauphiny, in consequence of the cruelties of the Inquisition; and fresh victims arrived as late as the year 1500, to settle in the valley of Votturata near their brethren, and to share with them the final extirpation of these flourishing colonies. And yet, it must be again repeated, all the writers of the age bore testimony to the skill of the colonists, all acknowledged their industrious habits and irreproachable manners, except, indeed, the priests, who complained of some of their singularities. “They do not,” say they, “make any of their children monks or nuns—they pay no attention to chants, wax-tapers, lights, bells, or even masses for the dead. They have their children instructed by foreigners, and pay them (the priests) nothing but the tithes they had agreed with the

¹ Muston.

lords for." Still these tithes were regularly rendered, and together with the rents of the estates, were so augmented by the superior cultivation introduced by the settlers, that both priest and landlord, for nearly two hundred years—the one from necessity, and the other from self-interested motives—tolerated the heretic colonists. But a time came when the triumphs of the Reformation awakened the dormant suspicions of the Papacy, and the bloodhounds of the Inquisition were set again on the track of the martyrs and confessors of a purer faith.

It will be supposed that the *Vaudois barbes* did not pass by their children of the Calabrian colonies; both in going and returning they visited them, and the faithful who were scattered in every principal town in Italy. In Venice their number is affirmed to have amounted to six thousand; in Genoa, and in the fair Florence, it was proportionately large. Gilles tells us, in reference to the last-named city, that one of the *Vaudois barbes* going one day into a church there, heard himself denounced by the preacher in the following curious strain, "O Firenze!" exclaimed the monk, "what does thy name mean?—the flower of Italy. And that thou wast, till these *Ultramontanes* persuaded thee that man is justified by faith, and not by works; and herein they lie."¹

These transient visits of their pastors, however, did not satisfy the growing desires of the colonists for spiritual instruction. They had heard of the revival of the fainting Church of the Valleys; glorious tidings had reached them of the great Reformation in Germany; and amid all the temporal blessings showered on them, they still earnestly desired to partake of the gifts of the Spirit now so abundantly poured out on the nations. Might they not also have felt that a time

¹ Gilles, p. 20.

of persecution was at hand, and looked for strength to abide the coming storm? Our information on the subject is but scanty, and it will be useless to inquire particularly for motives; there are facts enough to prove that the Calabrian colonies were divinely taught, and, when the hour of trial came, supernaturally supported.

The last *barbe* who visited the Calabrian settlements, and reached his house in safety, was an ancestor of the historian Gilles; and from him they learned the courageous resolutions of the Synod of Angrogna in 1532, which will be noticed more particularly in the sequel of our history. They immediately dispatched one of their principal men, named Marco Usceyli, to Geneva, to solicit from that Church a pastor who would share with their own Vaudois minister, Étienne Négrin, the care of the colonial congregations. A young convert from Popery, who was at that time finishing his studies at Paris, was pointed out by general consent as the most eligible person for the mission; a perilous distinction, but never was agent more fitly chosen.

Jean Louis Pascale was born at Coni in Piedmont; he was educated in the Roman Catholic Church, and followed the profession of arms. Quartered with his regiment at Nice, he there heard the faithful preaching of some Vaudois pastors, and became a diligent and prayerful reader of the Holy Scriptures. The result may be divined, but it was not bounded by his own conversion. He anxiously desired the spread of the truth he had himself embraced, and, to promote it, sheathed his sword, and entered on a course of studies for the ministry. We have said these were nearly completed when he was nominated to Calabria. Louis Pascale could not be ignorant of the danger of such a charge. The Inquisition was busy lighting its fires in every market-

place, and the prisons were fetid with the wretched multitudes who festered in them; but these things moved him not,—nay more, his ardent faith combated and vanquished yet keener trials. A very few days before his nomination to a service which might, which would probably, separate them for ever, Pascale had pledged his faith to a young Piedmontese emigrant, named Camilla Guercina.¹ When he broke the news of his intended departure to her, “Alas!” exclaimed the weeping girl, “so near Rome, and so far from me!” But Camilla was a Christian, and she was resigned.

The preaching of this young soldier of Christ was very powerful, and was productive of much fruit. The light, at times partially obscured, now again placed on its candlestick, attracted the notice of the priests; and the lord of the soil, to save his own reputation as a faithful servant of Rome, felt himself obliged, though reluctantly, to cite Pascale and some of his principal Vaudois vassals before him. He reprimanded them sharply, and cast Pascale and his friend Usceyli into the dungeons of Foscalda. Here he would fain have stopped—he felt too highly the value of his faithful and industrious colonists to wish to weaken or scatter them; but the servants of Rome must do Rome’s bidding, and she willed that the flock should be smitten as well as their shepherd. The imprisonment of Pascale dates from 1559—in another year the peaceful and flourishing colonies of Calabria were extinct! Étienne Négrin, the other faithful minister, was seized at the same time; and after enduring secret tortures, and withstanding all the solicitations and threats of the priests, he died of starvation in the prison of Cosenza, from which his fellow-sufferer, who was reserved for a yet more glorious testimony, thus wrote to their sorrowing people:

¹ M'Crie's *History of the Reformation in Italy*, p. 283.

“ You well know how necessary afflictions are to remind the faithful of their duty, for as soon as they are treated with indulgence, this rebellious flesh intoxicates itself with the delights and ease of this world, and forgets its former principles.” In a letter addressed to his betrothed, he gives the following mild account of the indignities he suffered, whilst hurried from one wretched prison to another : “ It was on the 13th of April that we were taken, with twenty-two others who were condemned to the galleys. The worthy Spanish priest wished to make us pay for the privilege of not being chained to the rest ; but this alone did not content him ; he put on me during the whole way a pair of handcuffs, so tight, that the iron began to enter into the flesh, and caused me so much pain that I could not rest night or day ; and not one moment would he loosen them until he had drawn from me all the money I had—two crown pieces, which were all that remained to me for my expenses. At night, the beasts of the field were better off than we were, for they had litter to lie on, whilst we had only the bare ground !” In nine days they arrive at Naples ; here they are confined a month in the damp, fetid prison ; but the letters of Pascale are still the same transcript of a soul at peace with God, and almost forgetful, in its high destiny, of the injuries of man. A vast number of these valuable manuscripts have been preserved, every line of which deserves record. We must find space for a few more extracts. Writing to some of his flock at San Sesto, who regretted to him the absence of his teaching, or, as they termed it, “ the bread of life more than the daily bread of personal comfort,” he observes : “ Oh, draw from this chastisement of God the firm conviction, that, when the father and mother shut the cupboard which contains the bread for their children, they do it, not that they may perish

with hunger—on the contrary, they would change themselves into food, rather than see them reduced to this extremity. Therefore, dear friends, when God has deprived you of this spiritual food, it is not to make you die of hunger, but to quicken your appetite for a better nourishment.” And again he replies to their ardent expressions of attachment: “I know that you would give your lives to save mine, but let not this pass the bounds of Christian submission—and besides, what greater honour can God confer on us than to make use of this body to witness to His eternal truth?” When the mandate arrived for his removal to Rome, the undaunted Christian writes, “I go rejoicing in spirit, and strengthened by God.” The prisoners arrived in the seven-hilled city on the 16th of May, 1560; and during the four months he remained in its dark dungeons, the spirit of Pascale knew no depression. When undergoing his daily attacks from the Romish priest, assailed alternately by promises and threats, “I know,” he would reply, “I must walk in the road of the cross, and confess Jesus Christ with my blood; and if, from the fear of torments and death, I do not do so, I shall be unworthy of Him; and therefore you seek in vain to turn me from the truth.” But a severer proof awaited him. His brother arrived; and as he was a Roman Catholic, and professed a desire for the conversion of the prisoner, he was allowed to visit him in his cell.

“It was,” he writes to his son, “a dreadful sight to behold his naked head—his arms tied by small cords, which pierced the flesh, as if they were leading him to the gallows. Seeing him in this state, and meaning to embrace him, seized with grief, I fell to the earth, which increased his affliction; whilst he, perceiving I could not utter a word, said to me, ‘My dear brother, if you are a Christian, why should you be thus

distressed? Do you not know that there falls not a leaf from the tree without the will of God? Let us console ourselves in Him.'” His brother did all in his power to induce him to recant, even to the offer of half his fortune, but he answered only by assurances of his perfect resignation and unmoved resolve; and when the monk who admonished him began his usual exhortation, Pascale would interrupt him, “I know what you would say, but God will give me such strength that I shall never deny Him. But look to yourself,” he continued; “shut not your eyes to the grace of God, for which you will be inexcusable.” The prison in which the young confessor lay was cold and damp, and did not contain even a truss of straw. He begged the governor to remove him to another place. “Have some compassion on me in my last days,” he pleaded, “and God will have pity on you!” His brother and a doctor, who were present, seconded his request; but when the inexorable governor refused, turning to his interceding friends, Pascale said, mildly, “If he will not consent, I will have patience.” The next day his brother again visited him, but he signed to him to depart, having some suspicion of the intentions of the Inquisitors towards him; and this struggle over, Louis calmly prepared to meet his coming trial. The whole testimony of this remarkable witness would bear recording; but we have such an army of martyrs before us, that we can only seize on the most distinguishing points of each. One extract more, ere we approach the closing scene.

“The affection I entertain for you” (it was to his affianced bride he wrote) “grows with that which I feel for God, and in proportion as I have profited by Christianity, I have increased in my love for you. May you be consoled in the

Lord," he continued, after gently hinting at his approaching death, "that your life may be a reflection of His doctrine." On the 8th of September, 1560, he was conducted to the convent della Minerva, to take his trial, when he boldly confirmed the testimony he had so unwaveringly given, and ceased not, during the whole process, to give rejoicing thanks to God for allowing him to glorify His name before so large an assembly.

On the following morning Rome awoke from its monotonous calm.

Let us suppose that some newly arrived travellers stood on that day on one of its seven hills, contemplating a view that, once beheld, can never be forgotten. We will suppose, too, that it was presented to them beneath its usually clear atmosphere (a medium so transparent that, seen through it, the buildings have the appearance of vast mosaics, of which each stone can be separately distinguished), and was illumined by a sun whose rays so gilded the ruins of ages that they appeared rather to have been overturned by force than to have crumbled beneath the inexorable finger of Time. After contemplating the enchanting view there spread before them—the vast Colosseum throwing its shadow on the earth on one side; the Basilica of St. Peter, the wonder of a later age, rising majestically on another; and, near the castle with its guardian angel, the sluggish Tiber creeping beneath the arches of its classic bridges—we will further imagine that the strangers, turning towards the mighty amphitheatre, told "how its arena had been stained with the blood of thousands of the mangled victims of Pagan persecution,—how the emperor descended from his throne, the slave for a brief moment laid aside his burden, and even the Vestal Virgins hastened to the horrid spectacle."

But the travellers now descend the eminence and join the living stream which is passing over the bridge of St. Angelo into the court of the castle. Alas! the scene which they then witnessed proved that Papal Rome differed little but in name from her Pagan sister!

A scaffold, and at its side a pile of fagots, occupy the centre of the arena, and around these accompaniments of death are ranged rows of highly decorated benches. On a lofty throne in the centre sits the Pope, and near him his cardinals and councillors, spiritual and temporal, clad in sumptuous robes of scarlet, bearing on their heads mitred ornaments which give to their appearance a grotesque rather than dignified air. Behind, row upon row, are ranged the noble and gentle population of the city, whilst the crowd fill the court and neighbouring streets, eagerly pressing for admittance to the coming entertainment.

And now, amid their renewed hissings and execrations, the chief actor in the mournful drama—a pale, attenuated man—drags the heavy chains which manacle his shrivelled limbs, with painful effort, across the castle yard. His features, though haggard, are youthful, and even in that astounding moment wear an impress of undaunted courage, of resignation, and of holy peace. When he reached the scaffold, he turned round and addressed the crowd, and for a while the hiss of malice was silenced. “If I am put to death,” he said, “it is not for any crime, but for having confessed, with truth and boldness, the doctrine of my Divine Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ. As to those who hold the Pope to be God upon earth, and vicar of Jesus Christ, they are strangely mistaken, seeing that in everything, and everywhere, he shows himself to be a mortal enemy of His doctrine and true service, and of pure re-

ligion, and by his actions, that he is manifestly the real Antichrist." He could say no more; the Inquisitors gave the signal to the executioner; he was strangled, his body thrown on the flames, and the ashes scattered on the Tiber. "Thus," observes Crespin, "this man died, calling on God with so ardent a zeal that he deeply moved the assistants at his execution, and made the Pope and his cardinals gnash their teeth."¹

The Inquisitor-general, the Cardinal Alexandrin, after assisting at the martyrdom of Louis Pascale, set off to deal out the same vengeance on his mourning flock in Calabria, and arrived a few days after at San Sesto, accompanied by some others of his order. Concealing their murderous intentions, they assembled the inhabitants, declaring they meant no harm, but simply to invite them to attend their mass. The bells were rung, but no one responded to their call; all the inhabitants, with the exception of a few old people and some children, having left the town and gone into the woods. The monks quietly assembled alone at the mass, and, the ceremony concluded, retired to La Guardia, a neighbouring walled town, and closed the gates. Here, too, the bells were rung, and the people came together. "My beloved and faithful people," said the arch-inquisitor, "your brethren of San Sesto have abjured their errors, and assisted at the mass; we ask you to follow their example." The Marquis Spinello, their hitherto liberal patron, was drawn in to lend himself to the falsehood; and, yielding to his suggestions, the poor deluded and surprised people promised compliance. But the truth soon became known, and many even now escaped into the woods to join their

¹ Crespin, *Histoire des Martyrs*, fol. 520. Perrin, *Histoire des Vaudois*, p. 207, Monastier, p. 209.

companions. Two companies of soldiers were sent in pursuit of them. In vain they offered to give up all their worldly goods to be allowed to emigrate. "What have we done," they ask, "to merit this cruel treatment? Have we not been loyal subjects, laborious and dutiful servants?" No terms could be listened to but those of *conformity to the Church of Rome*—and death, under any shape that cruelty could suggest, was preferred by them to that. Finding all negotiation vain, they were constrained to take up arms, and thus put their enemies to flight. This victory procured them a short respite, but it drew on them the viceroy in person, at the head of a considerable number of troops. Tracked by bloodhounds to their retreats in the woods, scarcely any escaped death or imprisonment. The Inquisitors, more cruel even than the soldiery, after having, under false offers of pardon and protection, gained possession of one thousand six hundred of these guileless people, threw off the mask, and exhausted every species of torture, in the vain hope of inducing them to recant. Thus, hunted by one party, and betrayed by the other, only to be outraged by both, these noble and worthy scions of the Vaudois tree bore an undeviating testimony to their ancient faith amid the most excruciating tortures.

We pass over the horrid details, and close our history of this once blooming portion of the Lord's vineyard on earth—now transplanted into a garden in heaven, where the spoiler cannot enter—with an extract from a letter written by a witness of the scene it describes, and a Roman Catholic :

"I confess I can only compare these executions to a slaughter-house. The executioner came and called out one of these unfortunate creatures, and having wrapped his

head in a cloth, led him to a spot adjoining the house, where he made him fall on his knees, and he then cut his throat with a knife. Taking off the bloody veil, he then came for another prisoner, who underwent the same fate; in this manner eighty-eight persons were butchered. I leave your imagination to picture the horrible sight. At this very moment I can hardly refrain my tears. No one can ever describe the meekness and patience with which these heretics suffered such a martyrdom and death.”¹

“The Vaudois churches of Apulia,” writes Monastier, “and some other provinces of Naples, not having shown any prominent zeal, escaped the suspicions of Rome. Those amongst them who were really pious lost no time in disposing of their property, and seeking a home elsewhere. The rest bent their heads to the storm, and abandoned the profession of the gospel. We should, in this day, search those countries in vain for vestiges of the once flourishing colonies of the Vaudois.”²

¹ See this letter in Porta, *Historia Reformationis Rhetice*, t. ii. pp. 310-312.

² Consult Botta, *Storia d'Italia*, t. ii. p. 430; Léger, *Histoire Générale*, pt. ii.; Gilles, *Hist. Eccles.* ch. xxix.; Léger, pt. ii.; Crespín, fol. 515; Muston, *L'Israel des Alpes*.






CHAPTER V.

The Colonising Church.

(Continued.)

HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN AND DESTRUCTION OF THE
VAUDOIS COLONIES OF PROVENCE.

N tracing the history of the Vaudois colonies of Provence, we shall draw largely on the pages of a modern writer of great research,¹ who has given the subject his especial attention. In addition to much that is interesting and new relating to the colonies themselves, the author of *The Vaudois of Provence* has very clearly pointed out the distinction between this scion of the Church of the Valleys of Piedmont and the other sects of evangelical Christians, whom their opponents have included in the universal opprobrium of heresy, and under the generic appellation of heretics. The following quotation will, it is

¹ *Les Vaudois de Provence*, par Louis Frossard, Pasteur, pp. 1-12.

hoped, help to disentangle this somewhat complicated question, and enable the reader to trace more clearly the unbroken and isolated line of the primitive Vaudois Church :

“The Vaudois of Provence are one of the original colonies of those Vaudois of the Valleys of Piedmont, whose Christian origin, according to an opinion warmly controverted and firmly maintained, dates from the earliest Church. Historians have not precisely ascertained the time when the first Vaudois families established themselves in Provence. According to Nicolaï, of Arles, of many of whose works in manuscript we are in possession, we should conclude that the Vaudois of the Valleys of Piedmont sent, much earlier than is usually believed, one of their colonies into Provence. ‘Independently, they say, of the historical traditions which tend to prove it, the language used by the Vaudois in their Liturgy is partly Piedmontese and partly Provençal, with the remarkable fact that the latter forms the basis of the language.’¹ Nevertheless it cannot be disputed that a powerful opposition to the Romish Church existed a long time before them in the south of France, and had, even as early as 1228, become remarkable for the number and strength of its advocates. It is evident, indeed, from the confessions of the Archbishops of Aix, Arles, and Avignon,² that the reformers multiplied beyond their powers of extinction, and that, notwithstanding the numerous executions, it was impossible to find prisons vast enough to contain them. They were composed of sectarians of every opinion,—the disciples of Pierre Bruys, of Arnold, of Esperon, of

¹ *Histoire de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, t. xviii.

² See a quotation from their letter, page 58 of this work.

Joseph, etc., whose religious zeal often degenerated into turbulent excesses; but our humble Vaudois colony must not be confounded with these, nor with the political partisans whom the Counts of Toulouse found in Provence and the Comtat-Venaissin during these brief crusades against the unfortunate Albigenses, whose doctrines of faith we know only through their constancy in sufferings, and the calumnies of their adversaries, who were at once their judges and their executioners."

"Historians generally admit," continues the same author, "that in 1495 a new people were seen in Provence, descending from the Alps, trained to the laborious toil of the fields, skilful in planting the vine and the olive; upright, joining their hard hands to pray to God after their day's work: they were the excommunicated Vaudois from the other side of the mountains, called hither on account of their activity and their virtues, and preferred to the indolent natives of the south, who sleep in the sun. They were brought from the high mountains of the Marquisate of Saluce by the lords of Boulrier-Cental and Rocca Sparviera, who had gained the possession of a rocky waste at the north of the Durance. The country occupied by the new colony extended for six or seven leagues along the mountains of Leberon, called by the Romans Montes Albecerii, the last branch of the Alps which separate Provence from Comtat-Venaissin."¹ Here, in a country wasted by war and tyranny, these so-called heretics, mixing with a set of wretched peasants, whose manners they refined, soon changed the aspect of the country. It has been conjectured that there might yet have been found some remains of the

¹ *Les Vaudois de Provence*, p. 13.

Albigenses, who easily assimilated with the new-comers. The Vaudois in Provence, as everywhere, merited the protection of their employers, who overlooked their *heresy* for the sake of the valuable services rendered them by a people so industrious, skilful, and upright. The colonists were accompanied by their wives and children and their ministers ; and soon the deserted valleys stood thick with corn, with vineyards and olive gardens, and yielded an abundance of almonds and honey ; whilst the mountains were covered with innumerable flocks. How lamentable it is that the wrath of man should again convert it into a howling wilderness !

The history we have given of the Calabrian colony describes that of their Provençal brethren ; their dispersion also proceeded from the same cause—namely, the great movement of the Reformation, which, rekindling the zeal of the Christian settlers, awakened the suspicion of their persecutors, and was marked by the same inhuman cruelties on the one side and Christian heroism on the other. Feeling, however, their wants and their weakness, the Vaudois of Provence early sent two of their pastors with a characteristic epistle to the principal Reformers to solicit aid and advice. The names of these two distinguished missionaries were Georges Morel, of Freissinières, and Pierre Masson, of Burgundy ; but as the account of their mission is closely connected with another section of this history, we will confine our colonial sketches to matters more strictly local.

The first open attack on the Vaudois of Provence proceeded from the throne. “ Francis I., on his succession, thought first of his glory, then of his pleasures ; and as long as he had glory and pleasure he listened not to

the complaints which a jealous clergy made against the peaceful inhabitants of Leberon ; but when past pleasure left only regret and shame, the man who had placed his pride in encouraging the illumination of France, thought only of extinguishing spiritual light in the valleys of Provence.”¹ For this purpose, after a long series of persecutions, which it would be tedious to detail, a proclamation was issued, entitled the “Edict of Mérindol,” the principal town of the Vaudois settlements, in which the nineteen delegates who had failed to deliver themselves to the Parliament of Aix (on a private intimation that their lives were endangered by so doing) were condemned to be burned, together with all the inhabitants of the place, their goods confiscated, and their houses razed to the ground.

To the honour of many members of the Parliament of Aix, it must be added, that many, and more especially the more humane president, Chassanée, hesitated ; but the votes of the priests prevailed. The prelates agreed to defray the expense of the execution, although at the meeting held to consider the necessary measures, they met with opposition little expected from one of their own body. “I am constrained to own,” said a doctor of theology, named Bassinet, “that I have inadvertently signed many of the processes against these so-called heretics ; but I declare before God that I have had no peace of conscience since the secular judges have condemned to death those we pronounced guilty of heresy. And the reason is that for some time I have given myself to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and find many of the doctrines of the Lutherans conformable to them. Nevertheless, to maintain the honour

¹ *Les Vaudois de Provence*, p. 44.

of our holy Mother Church, of the Pope, and our order, it will be sufficient to impose some fine." But this and some other moderate measures being violently combated, the courageous defender of mercy and tolerance was driven from the assembly, and pronounced "more worthy of the flames than many who had been condemned to them." Nor was Bassinet the only martyr in the ranks of the natural opponents of the Vaudois. The Cardinal Sadolet, though one of the most elevated amongst the sons of the Roman Catholic Church, though admitted to the councils of the Pope, dared to plead the cause of the persecuted Vaudois, whose confession of faith, as well as their delegates, he received at his palace at Cabrières, objecting only to a few expressions against the priests, which he deemed too warmly expressed in the former.

"It is true," he said, "that some obscure persons have circulated respecting you charges which merit grave reprehension; but when we examined those charges we found them nothing but black calumnies and false criminations. As to myself, I should be concerned if they destroyed you as they undertook to do; and in order that you may the better understand the friendship I entertain for you, I shall be found in such a day at my house at Cabrières; and there you may come in safety, either in large or small parties, without any harm happening to you, and I will advise you of what I shall think most for your health and profit." Nor were these vain words; a short time after this excellent man averted, for the time, the vengeance of the vice-legat of Avignon, who arrived at the head of an army, the detachments of which were commanded by priests, whose mission was to "murder, not to teach." Before quitting his diocese for Rome, where he was

recalled, the venerable Sadolet assembled the inhabitants of the town and the greater part of his tenants, whom he chose in preference amongst the Vaudois, and declared to them that as soon as he arrived at Rome he would communicate with the cardinals, and strive to bring about a reformation. He warned them to be prudent, that they had many enemies, and promised not to forget them. Alas! this excellent man died shortly after, *quite suddenly after receiving the sacrament*. Nor is this the only instance in which the consecrated wafer has been made the medium of ridding the Church of Rome of those members whom she suspected of too much indulgence to those of another creed.

At length, though long delayed, the fatal Edict of Mérindol is to be put into immediate and rigid execution. The military commanders are nominated; all Provence resounds with the sound of martial music, and numerous bands both of horse and foot prepare to leave Aix, and rush like a devastating flood on the peaceful Christians of Mérindol.

We search in vain through the whole range of God's creation for any simile to which to liken this unprovoked outrage. If we try the trite comparison of the wolf ravaging the sheepfold, we find the wild beast driven by hunger and instinct. Do we turn to the hordes of barbarians who trampled on the arts of civilization? we may plead their ignorance and the blood-thirsty chiefs before whom they trembled. The vulture feeds only on the dead, the eagle bears her bleeding prey to her young; but bigotry itself, one might hope, would turn with horror from the priest-directed troops of Aix, to weep over their trembling victims in the devoted town of Mérindol.

Trembling and distracted, the inhabitants, aware of the approach of the army, recommended themselves to Him who appeared for a little while to have forgotten them ; the men bearing on their shoulders all they could carry away, followed by their weeping wives and children, left the deserted town, though with little hope of escaping from the troops, who advanced nearer and nearer, until the blast of the trumpet and roll of the drum could be heard amid the wild wailings of the frightened. And now the banners float over the adjacent hills, and the moving multitude are discerned winding down its side. But wherefore do they pause ? and why do the poor exiles, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, return to their homes ? In a short time the troops have retraced the road to Aix, and the voice of lamentation in Mérindol is turned into the song of thanksgiving.

This providential change was wrought by the benevolent energy and ready wit of the noble Jacques Raynard, Lord of Alnec, an inhabitant of Arles. Moved by compassion for these innocent people, as well as indignation at the injustice of the sentence gone out against them, he hastened to the president, Chassanée ; and after warmly asserting that the proceeding was opposed to every legal form and natural right, he concluded, with admirable tact, by reminding his auditor of a pleasant history connected with the early practice of that celebrated lawyer.

“ Will you permit me,” he said, “ to read to you a case in which you bore a part, and which you have deemed worthy of insertion in your book entitled *Catalogus Gloriæ Mundi* ? Whilst you were the king’s advocate, you will remember that a vast number of rats laid waste the town-ship of Auxois ; they applied to the officials of the diocese

to get them excommunicated. The official heard the complaint of the town lawyer, and ordered the rats to be cited by sound of trumpet at the cross-ways of the neighbourhood for three successive days; and these being expired, and the contumacious rats not answering to the call, the town-clerk took judgment by default, and claimed the right of excommunication. It was, however, determined that the absent rats should be provided with counsel, since the subject involved their entire ruin. *You* undertook to plead their cause, and proved that the citation was null and void. The rats were then cited from the pulpits of the parishes where they had committed their depredations. After the citation the town-clerk did not fail to make his appeal; but you represented that *cats* were in ambush on the roads, and that the defaulters had very just reasons for their non-appearance. This pleading, in a tone of pleasant raillery, did you much credit, since you by it showed adroitly how much caution should be observed in criminal trials. You, then, who have taught others, will you not take counsel from yourself and from your own book? Ah! sir," continued the Lord of Alnec, "it is not a case of rats, but of men and of Christians!"

This ingenious and eloquent pleading powerfully and permanently affected the president, who not only immediately withdrew the troops, but from that moment adopted the cause of tolerance, of which he was the courageous defender till his death, which happened too soon for the interests of the defenceless Vaudois.

After these occurrences, Francis sent to his lieutenant in Provence, Dubellay, Lord of Langeai, to make a minute investigation of the character of the Vaudois settlers, and report the same to him. Were it not drawn by the hand

of an enemy so soon to be raised against these poor people, we might imagine the portrait coloured by partiality. We have not space for the whole, but here are some of its beautiful features: "With regard to their manners, the greater part of the Provençals affirm that they are people of great industry; that the grounds which at their coming were only worth four crowns have now an annual value of three hundred and fifty; that they were peaceable, beloved by all their neighbours, sober, moral, keeping their word, paying their debts, charitable, suffering none amongst themselves to want, and giving to strangers and wanderers according to their power. They were, moreover, distinguished by their freedom from all manner of swearing or light conversation, and their avoidance of all society in which such were tolerated. We know of nothing against these people," pursued the informant, "excepting that when they enter a (Roman Catholic) church, which they rarely do, they pray without regard to the saints; and that if they pass a cross on the road they make no bow to it. The priests also attest that they say no mass, etc., that they take no holy water, and even when they sprinkle it in their houses, they do not return them thanks for it; that they make no sign of the cross when it thunders, only looking up to heaven and sighing; and that they make no offerings either for the living or the dead." After receiving this report the king issued a fresh edict—a mere mockery of mercy—offering pardon to his Vaudois subjects on terms which he and his priestly instigators knew too well they would not accept—recantation and the mass. Still the land proprietors were too deeply interested not to do all in their power to retain their faithful tenants; and, at their urgent appeal, some milder measures were at first resorted to.

The president, Chassanée, consented to lay their confession of faith before the Parliament. This touching document, which is preserved entire in the archives of Aix, is too long for insertion in these pages, but may be found at length in the work to which we have made such repeated reference.¹ The Bishop of Cavaillon, together with some members of the Aix Parliament, were charged with the conveyance of the king's edict and the urging its acceptance ; but the right reverend prelate and his doctor of theology, emulous of the glory of converting the heretics of Mérindol, arrived before their colleagues.

After some unsatisfactory conferences with the adult population, the bishop, who seems in the main to have been a good-natured man, called the children round him, and throwing them some small coin, the following conversation (given word for word on the authority of Camerarius) took place between them :

The Bishop of Cavaillon.—Let me hear you repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

The Children (after repeating).—We cannot explain it nor give an account of our faith, but in French.

The Bishop.—There is no occasion for so much learning ; it is enough that you have learnt and remember these prayers in Latin ; for there are many clergymen and even doctors of divinity, for whom it suffices to be able to give a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed.

André Meinard, Mayor of Mérindol.—And what use, I pray you, is it to utter words which one does not understand, and to repeat, like a parrot, the Pater and the Credo ? Truly, does not he lie and mock God, who, without understanding

¹ *Les Vaudois de Provence*, p. 101, *et seq.*

them, permits himself to say these words,—*I believe in God?*

The Bishop.—And dost thou thyself comprehend the signification of these words,—*I believe in God?*

(Here Andrew Meinard begins to render a reason of his faith.)

The Bishop.—I did not believe (*morbleu!*) there were so many doctors in Mérimondol.

André Meinard.—No; when the least of us could explain the principles of our faith better than I could; but try, I wish you to make the experiment on one of these children—the first that comes to hand—and you will then judge whether they are not competently instructed.

“Here the bishop, who was by no means prepared either for questioning or answering,” says the historian, “hiding his shame under a shudder of indignation, made no reply; which the Prefect of Mérimondol perceiving, said, ‘My lord, if you will permit one of these children to catechise his comrades, they will be well pleased to do so.’ The Bishop gave leave.” “Thereupon,” pursues Camerarius, “one of the children began questioning the others with the most attractive gravity and grace—you would have said, like a little professor—the others answering his questions in turn with so much ease and precision, that their auditors were not a little astonished. One of the monks who was present could not contain his admiration, and exclaimed, ‘I am compelled to express that I have often been at the Sorbonne at Paris, and heard the disputes in theology, but I have never gained so much good as I have in listening to these children.’”¹ Alas! poor little ones! they were soon called to put in practice the lessons they had been taught. We have preferred giving

¹ Camerarius, *Lugubris Narratio*, t. ii., p. 238.

these little anecdotes, to entering on a detail of cruelties which have filled the folios of indignant historians ; but, however repugnant, we must not shrink from the sterner portion of our duty.

Urged on by his wicked adviser, the Cardinal de Tournon, the miserable king, whilst on a bed of sickness, was induced, as an act acceptable to the God of mercy, to consent to the destruction of the Vaudois colonies. The Archbishop of Arles and the Bishop of Aix, with a great many of the neighbouring clergy, seconded the request, with too sure success, since the Vaudois' excellent friend, Chassanée, had died, and his successor, no less lenient, survived him only a short time, leaving the high office of the President of the Parliament of Aix to be filled by the Baron d'Oppède.

The Baron d'Oppède was one of those monsters of cruelty, of which the history of the Vaudois furnishes us with more than one example. He was a wretched instance of entire depravity, which should make us tremble, as being co-heirs of the same fallen nature, but which, at the same time, furnishes the thoughtful Christian with a practical lesson on the assertions of Scripture, both as to the corruption of man's heart, and the danger of indulging the evil passions by which it is assailed. Jean Meynier, Baron d'Oppède, seems early to have nourished that hatred towards the Vaudois which malignant dispositions ever evince towards those they have injured.

“Forgiveness to the injured doth belong ;
He never pardons who has done the wrong.”

The Baron d'Oppède, therefore, indulged the bitterest hatred against the colonists, because he had unjustly seized their goods, and had imprisoned them in his château, and

also because, when he would have forced them into exile, their brethren received them into their settlements. But a deeper cause instigated him to their destruction. A man neither of wealth nor ancestry, his boundless ambition had sought an alliance with the Countess du Cental, an heiress of high birth and large rental, principally derived from the labour of her Vaudois retainers. Having been rejected in his suit, his hatred to the colonists was increased by disappointed pride ; but his power of dissimulation equalled his other remarkable qualities, and, though surrounded by enemies, and, as we have said, without the prestige of rank, he attained to the office of President of the Parliament, adding to it, to the great discontent of the leading aristocracy, that of Governor of the country. Thus qualified, with the further power of military command, and with a lieutenant in every way formed to co-operate in all his schemes, we find him let loose to consummate the following order of extermination, which was received by the Provincial Court on the 1st of January, 1545: "Ordered, etc., etc., that the country be entirely depopulated, and cleared from such sectarians !"

How shall we relate the history ? We cannot do so methodically. Here are a *few* only of its shocking details. The estates of the Countess du Cental were, of course, the first object of d'Oppède's revenge. A considerable grange on her estates was set on fire. She sent a letter to the president, begging her vassals might be tried by legal judges, and not soldiers ; and this was promised on their laying down their arms and retiring to La Tour d'Aigues ;—need we add they were pursued and murdered ? Everything fell before the invading army, which, like the hot wind of the desert, scorched and blackened the fair face of nature. These poor peasants, who had been represented as dangerous rebels, fled

and left all their possessions behind them—all but their aged, their sick and helpless, whom they bore on their shoulders ; but even the lust of plunder gave way to that for blood. Thirty of the refugees were found in a wood and hacked in pieces, the commander giving the signal by cutting off, with his sabre, the bald head of an aged man. Forty persons took refuge in a barn, which was set on fire ; and whilst a soldier, touched by compassion, opened one of the doors, d'Oppède ordered the massacre of all who attempted to escape. At another place, five hundred persons were slaughtered in a church, excepting a few who were reserved for a worse fate. From thence the gorged soldiery fled to the court of the castle, then full of men and women : all were murdered by the order of d'Oppède, who cried out, “ Kill all, *even to the cat !* ”

Eight hundred were massacred at Cabrières :—alas ! where was the excellent Sandolet ? On a pillar in the middle of the ruins was the date of this bloody execution, and the following inscription in Latin : “ Cabrières has been punished for daring to resist God ! ”

But there were even worse outrages, which the pen refuses to trace. Let us rather return to Mérindol, and learn another lesson from its heroic victims.

When the Mérindolians saw there was no quarter for them, and that every outlet of escape was closed, they desired to meet once more together, to exhort each other, and to unite in prayer. Sanctified by trial, and sustained by faith in Him who, in the midst of peril and on the cross prayed for His executioners, they prayed too ; nothing but resignation and peace was heard from the mouths of those who had escaped only a few moments from the hands of their enemies. Their martyrologist has detailed all that was

said, both by old and young, in this touching assembly of the desert. The most aged spoke first, the younger afterwards. "The Word of God teaches us," said they, after prayer and a general confession of their sins, "to take care that none of us suffer as a murderer or a thief; and that, so far from being ashamed of enduring affliction as Christians, we should glorify God for it. For the Lord sends these afflictions to humble us and to prove our patience, to make us see our sins, in order that we may repent of them, and that He may have mercy on us." "With such fervour and zeal did they embrace the promises of the Lord," continues the historian, "that there was not one person in the assembly who did not give consent to the exhortations of both the old and young, together with the proposal, and deliberate resolution, of enduring the horrible menaces of their enemies, their utmost cruelties and extreme oppression, rather than give the least appearance of abjuration or renouncement of the truth."¹

After the entire destruction of the evangelicals, the Roman Catholic priesthood found they had raised a tempest which they could not quell; the soldiery had tasted the maddening draught of unrestrained sensuality, and cared not how their thirst was gratified. They pillaged indiscriminately—carried off the plate, the silver crosses, and even the bells from the churches; and the fruits of the earth being prematurely gathered and wantonly destroyed, famine and pestilence succeeded the destruction of a people whose character and history, such even as their enemies have represented it, seem rather coloured by the pencil of the poet, than traced by the iron pen of historic truth. But though the murdered and the

¹ *Les Vaudois de Provence*, p. 177.

fugitive could not cry for vengeance on earth, the great proprietors of the ruined estates brought their wrongs before the throne, which were answered only by a denouncement on all who harboured the fugitives, and a full justification of the acts of the infamous d'Oppède and his associates. But retribution came at last. When Francis, the chivalrous and admired heir of all the gifts of fortune and of nature, lay, in the prime of life, racked with pain, on his death-bed, the recollections of the cruelties he had sanctioned are said to have filled him with remorse; and, anxious to throw the guilt, not on One who could pardon, but on a fellow-sinner, he bade his son bring d'Oppède and his accomplices before the bar of justice.

This famous trial, of which authentic records are still preserved,¹ took place at Paris. All Europe was interested in its issue. Its progress brought to light, and stamped with authenticity, deeds which otherwise would have been hushed until the great day of retribution. The King's Advocate, Aubérg, pleaded during seven consecutive days. His statement, though rare, is still extant, but is said to be so favourable to the Vaudois "that the hearers finished by thinking he was their advocate." Notwithstanding this tribute to truth, wrung from the honest conviction of an opponent, "to the confusion and astonishment of the court," the prisoners were acquitted—not on the plea that their offences had not been proved, but that they were *justifiable* under the circumstances of the case. Henry had already liberated the Baron d'Oppède, and the Pope afterwards rewarded him with the highest honours in his gift.

¹ *Recueil de pièces concernant l'affaire de Cabrières et Mérindol.*—MSS. Bibl. d'Aix.

But d'Oppède was ere long called to appear at a higher tribunal. De Thou and other historians inform us, that "he lived but a few years to enjoy his distinctions, and died, like another Herod, of a malady as extraordinary as it was painful."





CHAPTER VI.

The Suffering Church.

THE FIRST GENERAL PERSECUTIONS IN THE VAUDOIS VALLEYS,
IN THE FOURTEENTH, FIFTEENTH, AND SIXTEENTH CEN-
TURIES—EXHAUSTION AND DECAY OF THE CHURCH.



It is related of Saturus of Carthage, one of the martyrs of pagan persecution, A.D. 202, that, condemned to fight with wild beasts in the amphitheatre, a leopard attacked him with such ferocity as to bathe him in the copious streams of blood that issued from the wound inflicted by its fangs, whereupon one of the spectators cried out, in derision, "He is baptized in his blood." This sorrowful baptism has been applied as a type of the sufferings of the Christian Church during her three centuries of pagan persecution ; and it did not lose its significance as afterwards carried out by her protesting children.

For many hundred years the Vaudois Church bent

beneath the cross, "baptized in her blood." A worse than pagan persecution bowed down her head, though it never overthrew her strength. Let it ever be borne in mind that the Waldenses *voluntarily* took up the cross of their Divine Master, and bore it meekly over the thorny path His footsteps had hallowed. Recantation would at any time have made their peace with Rome; the favour of their temporal masters might at any time have been secured by renouncing their fidelity to their Master in heaven.

In resuming the thread of the history, it is necessary to go back somewhat in the chronology, since, to avoid any needless confusion or breaks in the narrative, the story of the colonies has been given in an unbroken series, in accordance with the classification of the different sections of the Vaudois Church by which, as landmarks, we have steered our course. Even with these helps we have found our task one of considerable difficulty,—not from the absence of matter or proof, as the numerous Vaudois historians furnish both to superfluity; but in following the long, unvarying history of persecution and endurance, we fear, on the one hand, to weary, perplex, and perhaps disgust by a too minute detail; on the other, to pass by particulars essential to historical faithfulness.

At the period at which we now return to the valleys of Piedmont, the emissaries of the Inquisition were tracking the footprints of the reformers in every part of Europe, and extinguishing the light of the gospel by their too successful watchfulness. In Portugal and Spain we find the flames of its *auto da fé* illuminating every square of their large cities; in Italy, the martyr and the Bible alike feeding the fires; whilst Germany, Bohemia, Holland, and Switzerland are

crowded by the homeless victims of a ruthless crusade. England, too, on whom "the day-star of the Reformation" arose about this time, had her share of trial. Wickliffe himself was persecuted and silenced; his followers, the Lollards, imprisoned and slain; and his invaluable labour, the translation of the Bible into English, denounced and suppressed.¹

Although many detached instances are on record, we find no account of systematic and open persecution in all the Waldensian valleys until the Christmas of 1400. Not but that each successive Pope, emulous of the renown of the great crusader, Innocent III., had issued his bulls and called for new crusades against the heretics; but the thunders of the Vatican rolled off in vapour. The princes they invoked did not heed. They were either too merciful or too politic to undertake a war which promised little else than a miserable triumph over a few peaceful mountaineers. The valleys of Piedmont, beautiful and picturesque though they be, held out no golden lure like the rich cities of Languedoc and Provence; and the house of Savoy (at least it is thus their loyal Vaudois subjects like to believe), unless goaded on by foreign powers, have never been desirous of interfering with their religious belief. Thus the efforts of the Popes, John XXII., Gregory II., and Clement VII., failed to stir up any *public* demonstration of wrathful orthodoxy against the stray sheep of the wilderness. But the wolf was not entirely excluded, and the active agent of the Inquisition, Borelli, at whose instigation a hundred and fifty Vaudois, men, women, and children, were burned alive at Grenoble, is accused of being

¹ Besides the colonies of Calabria and Provence, there was that of Bohemia, where, as we have seen, Peter Waldo and his followers took refuge in the twelfth century. In the fourteenth century persecution again drove the Waldenses to that land, and they were the means of a spiritual revival there.

the leader of that first invasion of the Vaudois valleys to which we have alluded.

At Christmas, 1400, that holy season in which peace and salvation were proclaimed to man from heavenly harps, far other sounds broke on the ears of the shepherds of the Vaudois Alps of Pragela. The clang of trumpets and shout of war proclaimed the invasion of their peaceful valleys, whilst armed ruffians rushed through their villages, spreading terror and devastation. The snow lay deep on the mountains, but, in spite of this and the inclemency of the season, the inhabitants, taken by surprise, fled to them for refuge. The foe pursued, many fell beneath their swords, many were taken prisoners, and yet more perished from cold and hunger. The spot on which the fugitives first eluded the pursuit of the invaders still bears the name of Albergan (refuge). Here they passed the night without food or shelter, and on the following morning, sixty—some writers say eighty—little children were found dead in the arms of their mothers, many of whom had perished with their infants, and were enclosed in the same winding-sheet of snow.

The Popish troops passed the night in revelling in the deserted hamlets, and retired the next day laden with plunder. It is supposed that, in the ardour of their pursuit for “gold and blood,” the Inquisitor and his troops had occasionally acted on the principle of the Pope’s legate at Beziers, and confounded the Roman Catholics with the heretics: for the voice of indignation was so loud in Dauphiny and Piedmont against their proceedings, that the Pope advised his agent to “moderate his zeal;” and thus the Church in the Wilderness had rest for a brief space.

The lull, however, was deceptive; it was but—

“The torrent’s stillness ere it dash below;”

for the year 1488 witnessed one of the fiercest persecutions yet endured by the suffering Waldensians.

Again the thunders of the Vatican resounded through every court of Europe; again the more seductive voice of plenary pardon and unrestrained licence penetrated every corner. Charles VIII. of France, and the second Duke of Savoy of that name, promised their aid in the crusade raised by Pope Innocent VII. against *heresy*; and the idle, the profligate, and the sordid flocked in thousands to their banners. The army thus got together was divided into two battalions, and entrusted to the command of the Pope's legate, Albert de Capitaneis, Archdeacon of Cremona. Whilst that portion of it which belonged to France was designed to invade Dauphiny, the Piedmontese were ordered to make the circle of the eastern valleys, destroying all the Protestant settlements which they encountered in their several ways, until the two streams met in the Vale of Luserna, to roll their united waves over the neighbouring country.

The French detachment, commanded by the Count de Varax, ascended the mountains of Dauphiny, filling the Vale of Loyse with the victims of their barbarity, and fortunately giving time to the neighbouring inhabitants of Argentière and Freissinières to guard their passes, and oblige their invaders to retreat. But it is no part of our history to describe the course of these worse than barbarian assailants, until we behold them descend like a swollen torrent on the Valley of Pragela, the most northern of the Vaudois valleys, ravaging the towns, murdering the inhabitants, and laying waste the whole country. The natives fled, but, overtaken by the destroyer, suffered the same cruelties as had but recently been exercised in Dauphiny. Inflammable materials,

collected before the caves in which the fugitives hoped to find shelter, were ignited, and a guard was placed to put to the sword, or throw back into the flames, all who fled from suffocation within. But though taken at first by surprise, the Vaudois, with the courage of their race, soon rallied and succeeded in repulsing the enemy. *

In the meantime, the troops collected by the efforts of de Capitaneis, assembled in great numbers, besides a vast multitude of followers attracted by the promise of pardon and plunder. The first sally of the united force was singularly defeated. A detachment of seven hundred men, hoping to surprise the Valley of San Martino, had reached the outskirts of the village of Pommiers, when they were attacked by the inhabitants with the resistless force imparted by despair, and every invader was cut off save one, an ensign, whose life was spared to return and tell his brethren-in-arms how the despised heretics could defend their hearths and altars. Roused by rumours of the coming foe, the Vaudois now hastened, with their wives and little ones, and such articles of food as they could carry, to their refuge amid the fastnesses of Pra del Tor and its adjacent bulwarks; and thither, breathing revenge and slaughter, their combined foe prepared to pursue and annihilate them. But this was of no easy accomplishment. Vast mountain barriers rose around them, forests of mighty trees sheltered them, foaming torrents and precipitous rocks kept back the foot of the destroyer.

On the side on which alone the Valley of Angrogna is accessible, the foe, ascending the gently sloping acclivities of San Giovanni, reached the upper plains and rock of Roccamanéot, their war-clang resounding amongst the everlasting hills. On these an army of another character awaited their



ROCCIAILLA, VAL ANGROGNA.



approach, whose armour was faith, and whose watchword was prayer. Prostrate before the God of battles, they earnestly implored His assistance; the enemy scoffed as they beheld the little band on their knees, and cursed as the voice of their supplication reached their ears; but their triumph was of short duration. It is related that one of their chiefs, Le Noir, of Mondovi, foremost also in blasphemy and scorn, raised his vizor in contempt of the mountain bowmen, when an arrow, discharged from the bow of Peiret Revel, of Angrogna, struck him between his eyes, and he fell to the earth a corpse. The soldiers, terrified at the death of their principal leader, fled with precipitancy and heavy loss, leaving the Vaudois to celebrate their wonderful deliverance with hymns of praise and thanksgiving.

Burning with shame and revenge, the enemy reassembled their scattered forces, and soon returned to the attack. They once more "assailed the valley of Angrogna, and succeeded in making themselves masters of the plains and villages on the left side of the torrent as far as Rocciailla, a mass of rocks which descends abruptly from the neighbouring heights of La Vacherie, and confines the torrent of Angrogna at its outlet."

To reach the Pra del Tor (in which, as we have already observed, the natives had taken refuge), it is necessary, advancing on the side of the lower valley, to proceed through a defile so narrowed by overhanging rocks as barely to leave room for a footpath beside the channel of the impetuous torrent. In this straitened gorge the passage of so large a body of men was naturally impeded; and, to add to their difficulties, just as those in advance had reached the Pra del Tor, and imagined themselves sure of their prey, a thick fog, gathering on the tops of their sheltering rocks,

spreading over the plain, and rolling in volumes through the valley, hid the victims from their sight. Emboldened by what they deemed the interposition of Providence in their behalf, the Angrognians sprang from their retreats on the invaders, who, unable to advance and afraid to retreat, halted in perplexity. Whilst some of the Vaudois tore up large masses of rock to hurl down on the heads of their enemies, others hung on their retreat, as crowding together through the narrow defile they precipitated each other over the rocks into the foaming torrent. Thus the fog, the precipice, the rock, and the torrent—even the foe itself, were engines of punishment in the hand of a righteous Judge on the wicked, and of deliverance for His oppressed people.

The slaughter of the enemy was very great on that eventful day. One of them has been singled out as an object of unenviable celebrity, and the traveller is still shown the spot on which the just vengeance of Heaven, as we believe, overtook him. It lies in the channel of the torrent, in one of those deep basins hollowed out by the falling stream, and is called in the *patois* of the country a *Tompie*, from the peculiar sound made by the waters as they rush through it, first filling, and then rising in dark eddies to the surface. The Piedmontese captain who has given his name to one of these dark abysses of the turbulent stream, is represented as a man of gigantic stature, and history further informs us that whilst, like Goliath of old, he was pouring forth blasphemies against the army of the living God, a stone flung by another champion from the sheepfold hurled him into the whirlpool, which to this day retains his name. On the brink of the “*Tompie Saquet*” there is a rock to which tradition with her mystic finger points as the melancholy

mountain *morgue*, on which the unwieldy corpse was laid when drawn from the eddying waves.

We lately visited that spot, on a day of uncommon brilliancy, with a Vaudois pastor, who drew our attention to the mist rising over the opposite heights, and creeping slowly down their sides—"the same everlasting curtain," he observed, "which had covered the heads of our forefathers so often in the day of battle."

We now proceed with the sequel of that remarkable contest from which we have made this little digression, trusting that our readers will think with ourselves that there are no illustrations of the past more interesting than those drawn from a comparison with the present.

It is to be lamented that particulars have not been preserved of many other signal deliverances, which marked the course of the devastating warfare that continued, for the space of a whole year, to harass the poor men of the valleys. Though often triumphant, they were always suffering, and must have entirely failed had it not pleased One, in whose hand are the hearts of princes, to incline that of Charles II., Duke of Savoy, to put an end to the cruel conflict. This prince, then only twenty years of age, repentant, we should hope, of his guilty acquiescence in the unjust designs of the Pope and his legate, sent proposals of peace to his injured and ever-forgiving subjects. They were entrusted to a bishop who came to Angrogna to confer with the Vaudois, and finally persuaded them to send a deputation to the court. Twelve of their principal men were graciously admitted to an audience of their sovereign at Pinerolo, when, after listening to their defence, he candidly confessed he had been unjustly incited against them.

Another deputation of rather an unusual kind was, at the

duke's desire, sent from the valleys—a lovely band of young diplomatists, who did more to destroy his prejudices than the arguments of the most experienced statesmen could effect. It must have been a pleasing sight to behold the young sovereign in the midst of his children-subjects, reading in their bright eyes and pearly smiles a refutation of the calumny, which had represented the children of heretics “as monsters with eyes in the middle of their foreheads, and three rows of black teeth.” Princes are now better informed, even in countries where heretics, so called, are still held in abhorrence ; but that some of their subjects are kept in the same miserable ignorance we have the means of proving.

A young Vaudois peasant informed the writer that, having business to transact in some village of Piedmont, he could not persuade an old woman, whom he there fell in with, that he was not a Roman Catholic. “No, no,” said she, looking closely at him, “you can't deceive me ; I know the heretics have all got one eye in the middle of their forehead, and three rows of black teeth.”

Such, then, is the history of the first general persecution within the immediate boundaries of the Vaudois valleys ; how often will it be our lot to repeat the same afflicting history ere our labours are finished !

For a brief space the suffering church had a little cessation from outward attack, and enjoyed the restoration of her former limited freedom ; and yet this transient peace could not heal her wounds or dry her tears. Her children had been slain, her lands laid waste ; the heathen had trodden down her sanctuaries, and made her pleasant places desolate. Nor was it the least amongst her griefs to fear that the faith of some of her children had begun to waver, or at least that the constant espionage carried on by the emissaries of the

Inquisition had induced some to make concessions unworthy their high calling ; and that amongst those who had stood firmest in the hour of warfare were some whose courage sank amid the lull of peace. The bow had been too tightly strung, and strength, almost supernaturally exerted, had sunk into weakness. Never was there an occasion in which the Vaudois Church more required to be reminded of her *first* love, to stand fast by *first* principles ; never did her members need so much the counsel and support of sympathizing and able advisers ; and in this her moment of lowest depression her faithful God did not desert her, but raised up mighty and efficient friends, in the persons of those great and good men whom it was His pleasure to honour as His chief instruments of the Reformation.





CHAPTER VII.

The Resuscitated Church.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON THE VAUDOIS
CHURCH—VISIT OF THE REFORMERS, AND PRINTING
OF THE FRENCH BIBLE.



THE glorious light of the Reformation had partially illumined the greater part of Europe ere its beams penetrated into the valleys of the Vaudois, filling the hearts of their desponding inhabitants with joyful gratitude. The herald of the wonderful intelligence was the Pastor Martin, of the valley of Luserna, who had been sent on a mission of inquiry, and returned in the year 1526, bringing with him several books which had been printed by the Reformers.

The rapid revival of the fainting Vaudois Church proved how much vitality she still possessed ; more especially when

we find her recovered energy did not evaporate in sentiment, but was quickly roused into action. The first impulse of the Vaudois of the valleys, and that of their colonies also, was to despatch messengers to the principal Reformers of Germany and Switzerland, soliciting advice and co-operation. The most celebrated of these, Georges Morel, of Mérindol, and Pierre Masson, of Burgundy, have already been named as the agents of the Vaudois of Provence. These devoted pastors were charged with letters to Œcolampadius, at Basle, to Capiton and Martin Bucer, of Strasburg, to Berthold Haller, of Berne, and others of the Reformers ; and if the simple ministers of the primitive Church felt their hearts glow with love and veneration when admitted to this conference, we are told these distinguished men received a deputation from the Church in the Wilderness with no less emotion. The deputies delivered to Œcolampadius a Latin epistle, explanatory of the doctrines and discipline of the Vaudois Church. We will give a few extracts from this touching document :

“ The Christians of Provence to Œcolampadius. Health ! Having learnt that the all-powerful God has filled you with His Holy Spirit, as appears by your works ; we have recourse to you, with the assurance that the Divine Spirit will enlighten us by your counsels, and will instruct us in many things which are hidden from us, by reason of our ignorance and weakness, to the great detriment of the flock of which we are the unworthy directors ; and that you may also become acquainted with our position. You must know that we, poor pastors of this little flock, have, during more than four hundred years, experienced the most cruel persecutions ; but not without signal marks of the favour of Christ, who has often delivered us when we groaned under the weight of

tribulation. In this state of weakness we come to ask of you advice and consolation.”

The letter goes on to describe their mode of admission to holy orders, and their rules of pastoral conduct. It also enumerated their articles of faith on the Divine Trinity, the Incarnation and Divinity of Jesus Christ, and all the essential points of Christian doctrine. They furthermore explained their rejection of those doctrines peculiar to the creed of Rome, such as Transubstantiation, Idolatry, Purgatory, etc., etc.; and concluded by asking advice on some points on which they experienced doubts and hesitation.

“In all important points,” they continued, “we are one with you; and since the time of the apostles our faith has been the same; but in this we differ, that, by our fault or the weakness of our minds, we do not comprehend the Scriptures as well as you, and therefore we come to you to be guided and edified.”

We find two replies of *Œcolampadius* full of affection and fraternity. One of them, dated 1533, begins thus:

“*Œcolampadius* to all the well-beloved brothers in Christ, called *Vaudois*. Grace from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

“We would not that what we write,” says the Reformer, “should be taken as if from pride we arrogated to ourselves any superiority, but as a discussion held with our brothers in charity and fraternal love.”

In his second letter, nevertheless, he reprimands some amongst them, who had been present at the mass, and bowed to the images, reminding them that such pretended sacrifices for the sins of the living and the dead implied that Jesus Christ had not made, “by His oblation once offered, sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world.”

The reply of Martin Bucer is also extant, and breathes an affectionate and brotherly interest equally ardent.

The Vaudois *barbes* having faithfully executed their mission, set out on their return. One only reached his earthly home; the other, Pierre Masson, was waylaid at Dijon, probably during some visit to his brethren in the faith, imprisoned, and shortly after received the crown of martyrdom. Georges Morel arrived alone at Mérindol, that little town of so many touching recollections, where he assembled all the chief persons of the place and neighbourhood, and delivered to them the letter of Œcolampadius, enforcing with great earnestness the counsel of the Reformer, respecting any guilty compliance with the abuses around them, and stirring them up to a more separate and severe walk and confession, by the example of those holy men whose advice and co-operation they had sought.

Thus, with that modesty and docility which have always characterized the Vaudois Christians, we find them receiving the reprimands of the Reformers, and, although but their younger brethren in the faith, looking up to them with the reverence of sons. Let not this important fact, however, be overlooked, which has been thus forcibly brought forward by one of the Vaudois historians :¹

“That *the conscientious study of the Word of God* led the Reformers, when they left the Roman Church, to reconstruct a Church which, from its first formation, won the esteem and sympathy of the ancient Vaudois Churches, who had, as far as was in their power, preserved the pure doctrine and worship of the first ages of Christianity.”

On the 12th of September, 1532, the valley of Angrogna was again invaded by strangers; not, however, as heretofore,

¹ Monastier.

by those "whose feet were swift to shed blood," but by such as were "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," by bands of thoughtful men, soldiers of the cross. They came from the sister mountains of Switzerland, from the country of the reforming monk, from the gentle brethren of Bohemia. They hastened, like duteous children, from the colonies of the Vaudois Churches; many a hidden one, too, emerged from nearer places of refuge, to draw strength and consolation from the counsels of their brethren in the faith, who were congregated on that memorable day at the Synod of Champforans.

Never, *never* did holier assembly meet in more fitting temple—yet, although we have sat beneath its ancient chestnut trees, on lawns of brightest verdure sloping to the torrent's side; measured with almost aching eyes the height of its sheltering rocks; though we have gathered the wild lilies from the brink of the clear, the matchless torrent of Angrogna, we cannot paint the scene. There is a holy influence shed around, which makes the traveller feel he is in the presence of more than the beauty of outward forms, however attractively combined.

Amid the assemblage of devoted men at the Synod of Champforans, the presence of the bold and faithful Reformer, William Farel, has been ascertained by a species of witness by no means rare in Vaudois history. Jeannet Peyrel, of Angrogna, having been cast into prison on account of his religion in 1535, acknowledged to having kept guard over the meeting of the pastors "who taught the good law,"—and that amongst them was one named "Farel, who had a red beard, and rode a beautiful white horse;" and furthermore, "that of his two companions, one was very tall and rather lame, and the other had a horse almost black."

One of these last was, doubtless, the Reformer's friend and fellow-countryman, Antony Saunier, from Dauphiny.

The Christians of that time seemed to have bodies suited to the mind which directed them,—distance, difficulty, “all seasons and their changes,” seemed to bend to the iron purpose of their souls. We find them everywhere—now confronting princes and potentates, now arguing with logicians and divines, and again crossing the Alps at the cry of the men of the valleys to “come over and help them.”

The Synod of Champforans met on the 12th of September in the year 1532, and was composed of a large number of earnest and devoted Christians,—deputies from all the Vaudois Churches, pastors from the Protestant congregations of Switzerland, brethren from Bohemia, and, as we have seen, some of the prominent Reformers. It was a solemn convocation. When we consider the peculiar circumstances of the times, and the situation of the Vaudois population, we feel it could not have been otherwise. The Synod sat for six consecutive days, for although the questions had been carefully prepared, much time was necessary for their free discussion. A short Confession of Faith was drawn up, which their historian calls “a supplement to the ancient Confession of Faith of the year 1120, and which he affirms it does not in any way contradict.” But there are two or three leading articles which prove a more recent origin, and betray foreign interference. It were to be desired—and in this we echo the sentiments of some of their living ministers—that the Vaudois had retained more of the peculiar features of their venerable Church, together with their language, and the affectionate appellation of *Barba*, which assimilated so well with the simplicity of their primitive pastors.

Perhaps it was somewhat of the same clinging to the past,

some leaning towards the episcopal form of church government, that caused the only dissentient voices in this remarkable convocation. We are told that two of the delegates withdrew from the assembly to lay their objections before the Churches of Bohemia. This difference of opinion, whatever may have been its grounds, made no change in the Christian feelings of either party towards the other. They felt, and still feel as brethren in Christ, and that their Churches are sisters, sprung from one common parent.

The two dissatisfied ministers returned the following year, bearing letters from their elders, the contents of which were discussed at a synod called for that purpose in the valley of San Martino, on the 15th of August, 1533. The resolutions of the former year having been again passed, it is added that the brethren, Jean de Moulines and Daniel de Valence, “left the valley not to return.”

Far be it from us to undervalue the benefits derived by the Vaudois from their union with the great leaders of the glorious movement of the sixteenth century. The counsels of the Reformers to their brethren of the valleys were worthy of their own renown, and the cause to which they were pledged. Truth—simple-minded, single-eyed truth—was the basis of all their exhortations, and the resolutions entered into at the Synod of Champforans proved how earnestly the Vaudois prepared to carry into effect the advice given to them.

It was here determined that they should lay aside every kind of dissimulation or reserve, every cowardly concealment by which they had hoped to screen themselves from their enemies. That they should, on no pretext or compulsion whatever, take part in any Popish ceremony, or countenance any Popish superstition; never acknowledge as

pastor any priest of the Romish Church, or have recourse to his ministrations. They even took the courageous resolution no longer to carry on their own social worship, as they had hitherto conceived it prudent to do, in secrecy; but to celebrate it with that publicity and openness, neither shunning nor courting notice, which they considered as most conducive to the glory of God.

What a noble example do these humble yet heroic Christians set us! How poor, how contemptible does the hesitating professor appear at their side, shrinking from confessing his Saviour before men, though neither bonds nor stripes await him! How doubly guilty, when viewed by the bold relief of their unshrinking truthfulness, does the doctrine of reserve with all its ramifications of natural and non-natural significance seem, even without taking into the account the relative situation of the two parties—the one, members of a persecuted and impoverished Church, surrounded by spies, and daily subjected to penalties and denunciation—the other, enjoying liberty and light, together with the blessing of a mild and enlightened Church; and whilst performing the easy and delightful duties attached to it rewarded by the respect and affection of those amongst whom they are exercised!

At the Synod of Champforans another and most important resolution was entered into, and carried into immediate effect—the translation of the Holy Bible into the French language, of which the poor Vaudois undertook the expense, together with that of the first edition. This was a most grateful present from these indigent people to the Reformed Churches; and the fifteen hundred gold crowns, which they sent for its completion, was a very large sum, when the source from which it sprang is considered.

This Bible was printed at Neuchâtel on the 5th June, 1535, a folio edition, by Pierre de Wingle, called Pirot Picard. The Neuchâtelois granted him the freedom of their city for his beautiful and correct execution of the important task. The sacred volume bore the title, of which a reduced facsimile is given on the opposite page. It was translated by Olivétan, a kinsman of Calvin, who is said to have assisted him in his arduous task. The generosity of the Vaudois in defraying the expenses of the publication is acknowledged in the following lines placed at the beginning of the Bible :

“ Les Vaudois, peuples évangéliques
Ont mis ce trésor en publique.”

The account given by all their historians of the spiritual growth of the men of the valleys at this time, reminds us of that of the Apostolic Church in the freshness of its first love. We are told that “a clearer view of their duty strengthened those of the feeblest faith; zeal, which had been languishing for years, revived anew in every heart. A Christian life, not entirely new, but renovated, circulated faithfully through all the branches of the Vaudois Churches. *Barbes* and private Christians supported each other in realizing the one desire—that of glorifying their Saviour in the face of idolaters. Their ardent wish was to reproduce in action the device still engraved on the seal of the Vaudois Churches,—“a light shining in darkness.”

The annals of the Vaudois at that time furnish many proofs of this zeal put into action, nor was the awakening confined to the strict precincts of the valleys. The country people came in crowds to the appointed place of meeting; the citizens and inhabitants of the plains followed their example; even the lords of the soil protected the evan-



Qui est toute la Sainte escripture.
 En laquelle sont contenus/le Vieil Testament
 ⁊ le Mouveau/translatez
 en Francoys,
 Le Vieil/de L'ebrieu;
 ⁊ le Mouveau/
 du Grec.

Aussi deux amples tables/l'une pour l'interpretatoy
 des propres noms:sautre en forme d'indices/
 pour trouuer plusieurs sentences
 et matieres.

Dieu en tout.

Isaiah. I.
 Escoutez cieulx/et toy terre prestte l'auressille:
 car L'eternel parle,

gelical faith, and some of them openly declared themselves in its favour. In a short time the *barbes* were found to be too few for their work, and for the new cares which claimed their time and exertions. Those amongst them whose office it had been to train candidates for the ministry were obliged to give up this employment, and devote themselves entirely to preaching and the care of souls. Their meetings for public service, in conformity with the resolutions entered into at the Synod of Champforans, were held without concealment—though with as little notoriety as possible—either in the houses of the *barbes*, the dwellings of private persons, or, when the season permitted, in the open air on the mountain side, beneath the shade of their ancestral trees, and under their sheltering rocks.

But in the year 1535, the Vaudois were stimulated to put a last finish to their works of faith and labour of love, by building churches in which to worship their God. The first sacred edifice was raised at San Lorenzo, in Angrogna.¹ It was meet that this bulwark of her persecuted children should be the site of the first temple of the Vaudois Church. It was also in the vicinity of the hallowed precincts of Champforans. Another small chapel was soon after raised, somewhat higher up the valley, at a place called La Serre. In the same year, the people of Luserna lent a hand to the work, as well as the inhabitants of the valley of San Martino, and ere its close, temples rose in their localities also ; and devout worshippers thronged to all, to listen to the glad tidings of the gospel, to find consolation for past sorrows, and to draw strength and wisdom to support them through the trials which they felt too surely were impending.

¹ See Frontispiece.



CHAPTER VIII.

The Martyr Church.

NOTICES OF INDIVIDUAL MARTYRS IN THE VAUDOIS CHURCH.



THE communion of saints in the peaceful vale of Champforans, and its bright results, have furnished a delightful contrast to the history of cruelty and oppression which preceded, and to which we must too soon return. But, renovated by the Heaven-accorded nourishment, the men of the valleys, like the prophet of old, were called on to go forth to meet the enemies of their faith.

Like Elijah, too, they went forth alone, for the friends who had so generously hastened to their succour were called to another battle-field ; and their own colonists left the Synod of Champforans to enter on those fiery trials with which, in our section on the Colonizing Church, our readers have already been made acquainted.

But whilst the almost expiring Church of the Valleys

was experiencing the wonderful renovation of which we have attempted a sketch, the political world around underwent many changes. Charles III., Duke of Savoy, a mild but obstinate prince, and much under the rule of the clergy, had already consented to the archbishop's proposition of "hunting down" the so-called heretics, and had named to the chief command a nobleman of the neighbourhood, whose fierce disposition fitted him for the odious office, when Charles himself became the object of unjust attack.

His two powerful relatives, Francis I. of France, and Charles V., Emperor of Germany, were each desirous of the possession of Piedmont as a thoroughfare to the contested duchy of Milan. The duke knew too well the value and fidelity of his Vaudois subjects in guarding the mountain passes to waste their strength in persecution; and when Francis subsequently became the master of his uncle's dominions he was too much occupied in destroying his faithful Vaudois subjects in his own kingdom¹ to attempt a war of extermination in another quarter. The lull was favourable to the Vaudois of Piedmont, though the answer of Francis to their humble petition for liberty of conscience, "that he did not burn heretics in all parts of France to suffer a reserve of heretics in the Alps," must have convinced them how little they had to hope for from his clemency, had not his usurped position prevented his venturing on open aggression. Still the same undercurrent of persecution continued, and many were the hidden victims—many, too, the open witnesses.

Amongst the vanguard of the martyr band at this period we must notice Catelan Girardet. On reaching the place of execution, and in view of the pile on which he was to suffer,

¹ See Colonies of Provence, page 87 of this work.

he had the self-possession to dictate the following parabolic lesson. He desired that two stones might be brought to him, and rubbing them violently together, whilst the multitude watched his proceedings, he exclaimed aloud, "Ye think to abolish our Churches by your persecutions; but you can no more do it than my weak hands can crush these stones!"

A martyr of the following year, and one of the most distinguished pastors of the poor scattered flock, was Martin Gonin, of Angrogna, who, on his return from Geneva in 1536, whither he had gone on ecclesiastical affairs, was taken up as a spy; but the Parliament, on examination, found him innocent on this charge. Why he returned to his prison we are not told; but the jailer, who was an adept in his calling, on searching him anew ere he left it, found some papers involving him in a heavier charge than that on which he had been at first apprehended. A spy might hope for mercy, a heretic never. The Vaudois pastor was tried a second time, and condemned—not to the stake; his accusers, it is said, feared the light of his funeral pile; not to the executioner, for the martyr's dying accents might proclaim the cause for which he suffered. His sentence was drowning, and it was to be carried into effect in the silence and darkness of night. On the 25th of April, 1536, the missionary's burning light was quenched in the waves of the Isère. There were circumstances of painful interest connected with this midnight murder; but it matters little now those protracted agonies; the cold river of death has long been passed, and angels have welcomed the pilgrim on the other bank, and introduced him to the multitude of the redeemed.

But these were not the only witnesses who at this period

of comparative reprieve were summoned to tell their tale of wrongs and sufferings at the bar of God. Amongst others, two pastors returning from Geneva to the valleys, together with three French Protestants, were arrested at Chambéry, *imprisoned and condemned, and died triumphantly*. These few words comprise the history of thousands of the martyrs of this period.

We will select two or three from the Vaudois Church, which lies in our more immediate track, beginning with that of the youth Nicolas Sartoire, who, after following his studies at Berne for a year, was returning to the valleys in the bright month of May to hold holidays with his family. We can all imagine how his arrival was anticipated by that family, and how his former young companions shared in their joy. Sorrow and persecution would relax their grasp for a little in such a meeting, whilst each ready hand and heart were engaged in preparations of welcome, in spreading the board, and twining with bows of hawthorn and spring flowers the seat destined for the stranger. But he came not; the long absent, the best beloved, came not. The flowers withered, the festal treat was untouched; for he for whom it was prepared never returned. Cruel hands were laid on the youth as he crossed the frontier of his valley home, and he was thrown into a dungeon. Artful men tried all that bribery or menace could do to make him renounce the faith of his forefathers, but they tried in vain. He brought no shame on the pure blood of his race; and his parents had not to deplore his apostasy, though they were called to weep over his early loss. It was in vain they and their countrymen implored for mercy on the boy's tender years and guiltless head; it was in vain that Berne indignantly remonstrated at the unjust detention

of one of her students ; the priests of Rome would not give up their prey. They burnt him, burnt the boy-martyr, at Aosta, on the 4th of May, 1557. But he ascended the burning pile rather than renounce his God,—a free, a beautiful sacrifice.

“ Early, bright, transient, pure as morning dew
He sparkled, was exhaled, and went to heaven.”

One more martyr, not young and blooming, but firm and joyous as the last. Geofroi Varaille had seen fifty summers. His character, naturally reflective, had been matured by the best ripeners of human judgment—sorrow and experience. He was born of Papist parents; nay, was the only son of a distinguished commander in the invading army of 1488. He had also become a monk, and was so renowned for his abilities and zeal, that he was deputed to preach throughout Italy, in companionship with another celebrated cowed ecclesiastic, Ochino of Siena, the founder of the order of the Capuchins. These circumstances do not appear favourable to his conversion to Protestantism, still less the many lucrative benefices bestowed on him, and the honourable situations he was called to fill in the hierarchy. After his return from his missionary tour he was appointed to attend the Pope's legate in France ; and we next find him domesticated in the royal palace. But the “ Spirit bloweth where it listeth ; ” and so powerful were its breathings on the soul of Varaille that, unable any longer to resist its influence, he left all and fled to Geneva. In this city of the Reformers, after diligent study of the Holy Scriptures and deep devotional preparation, he received ordination by the laying on of hands, and afterwards became the pastor of San Giovanni in the valleys.

What an extraordinary history ! The son of a persecutor, the favoured priest, the admired courtier, content to become an humble pastor of the despised Waldensians ! But his career is not yet ended. On his return from a short visit to his native town, Busca, in Piedmont, he was arrested on the information of the monks, who were



SAN GIOVANNI PELLICE.

lying in wait for him. It would seem that his cold prison had more attraction for Geofroi Varaille than a king's palace ; for he might have escaped from that at Barge whilst on his parole, and subsequently through the instrumentality of his attached parishioners, had he not restrained their ardour, and bade them "leave the matter to God."

It was natural that more of the pomp and circumstance of authority should be called forth to burn an apostate priest of Rome than a commonplace heretic ; and we will do the hierarchy the justice to add that they did all they could to win back this once highly esteemed member of it. Neither bribes nor flattery were spared, when they saw how powerless threats were to move the iron resolve of the martyr.

The fine square of Turin was the theatre of his suffering, if that could be called suffering which he hailed as his privilege and release. Thousands are reported to have witnessed his execution, and to have borne their testimony to the joy, the deep mysterious joy, which irradiated his countenance as he delivered his parting address. There must have been a lingering of mercy on the part of his judges to have permitted this ; or do we owe the apparent softening of his sentence by previous strangling to their desire to shorten the powerful appeal ? There certainly was no compassion shown to the aged attendant of Geofroi Varaille, whose trembling hands were forced that day to perform strange offices, and who, after this compulsory service, was scourged and branded !

Two years before the martyrdom here related, the beautiful castle-yard at Turin, which we trust will never again witness such scenes, displayed the same eager multitude, the same apparatus of punishment, and heard the same noble confession, from Barthélemi Hector, a bookseller, or rather colporteur, of Poitiers. There is a beautiful Alp, called the Vacherie, which rises above Pra del Tor, on the summit of which numerous cows, as the name imports, graze during the summer months. Here the colporteur carried his books to sell to the labourers as they reposed at noon on the

mountain side. Here, too, he read portions of the Scriptures to the old grandame, or the little maidens, as they watched their cows and goats, or plied the distaff or the needle. But the enemy found him out on his forbidden errand, even in the wild solitudes of nature. Barthélemi was arrested and called before the judges to answer for his *crime*. But happily the colporteur's religion was no sudden impulse—was no ignorant or idle courting of danger. He had been inured to sights and scenes of woe, and had deliberately counted the earthly cost of confessing, and the everlasting risk of denying his faith. Nor did his constant mind waver when thus addressed in the hall—we will not call it of *justice*,—

“You have been surprised in the act of selling heretical books.”

“If the Bible contains heresies for you, it is truth for me,” was his answer.

“But you use the Bible to deter men from going to mass.”

“If the Bible deters them, it is a proof that God does not approve of the mass, and that it is idolatry.”

“Retract !” exclaimed the judge.

“I have spoken truth,” replied Barthélemi, firmly ; “can I change truth as a garment ?”

There was an unusual indecision in the colporteur's judges. They hoped, perhaps, by delay to persuade him to retract ; but months of prison hardship only confirmed his resolution. Even when he was being led to execution the offer of conditional pardon was renewed ; but the stake and all the dismal preparation for a violent death gave only a fresh impulse to his refusal. Exasperated by his obstinacy, they gave the fatal signal. “Glory to God,” exclaimed the intrepid martyr,

“that He judges me worthy of death!” And thus he died, for obeying the last injunction of his Master.

It will be a relief to the feelings of grief and indignation, which the matter we have too long dwelt on has swelled to overflowing, to relate the escape of two poor mountain birds from the net of the fowler. The Pastor Gilles, returning from Calabria with a Frenchman named Étienne Noel, arrived one evening at an inn in Savoy, intending to make it their quarters for the night. Here they fell in with a party of public officials; and it will be supposed that neither choice nor prudence would have induced them to join such a company at supper, had not the head of the band, who had other reasons than a desire for their society, urged his invitations with so much pertinacity that they deemed it unsafe to refuse. During the meal he so plied the strangers with questions, that they had great difficulty in answering them without betraying themselves; and, indeed, so well was it to be seen that they had failed to lull the questioner's suspicions to rest, that, complaining of fatigue, they retired to consult on the best means of immediate flight. How was this to be effected? There was but one way, and that was full of peril—namely, to endeavour to bribe the landlord to connive at their escape. The good man compassionated their danger, unbarred his door, and the prisoners were soon as free as the birds of the air, and joining with them in a matin song of praise and thankfulness.

We must not omit, in the martyrology of this period, an interesting pair of the name of Mathurin. The option of apostasy or burning alive was given, with three short days for choice; and the husband was awaiting their expiration, when his wife applied for leave to visit him, saying “she had something to say to him for his good.” That this was to

urge him to recant was not for a moment doubted by the commissioners, who conducted her to the prisoner. What, then, was their astonishment at hearing her exhort her husband "to persevere in the profession of faith to the end!" "Trouble not yourself," said the heroic wife, "with anything relating to this world, not even the painful death which awaits you—it will soon be past; and think not of leaving me desolate and a widow, for, by God's help, I will die with you!" And she did; one sole request she preferred, and that with so much earnestness that it was granted,—to die on the same day and on the same pile as her husband.

"The time would fail" to tell of all the individual traits of heroism and instances of suffering which belong to the history of the Vaudois Church; we have selected those we thought most interesting, and endeavoured to show that there was no age, sex, or station, exempted from the ordeal, and that all bore it with the same unwavering heroism. We must now proceed to the vast "cloud of witnesses" which the approaching persecution drew forth to martyrdom in masses.





CHAPTER IX.

The Witnessing Church.

PERSECUTIONS OF THE VAUDOIS UNDER LA TRINITÀ AND
OTHERS—THE PLAGUE IN THE VALLEYS.



AFTER having been subject to France for twenty-three years, Piedmont was restored to its rightful sovereign on the 3rd of April, 1559. This was a circumstance of great joy to the Vaudois, who looked forward with confidence to more tranquil times, since the young Prince Emmanuel Philibert, who succeeded his father, Charles III., in 1553, was much esteemed for his valour and discretion. He had, moreover, just married the Princess Margaret of France, who, like her accomplished relatives the Queen of Navarre, and the Duchess d'Este, was supposed to be favourable to the Reformed faith. But, alas! the treaty of peace which restored Emmanuel Philibert to the dominions of his forefathers contained one alarming condition, by which the parties severally bound

themselves to destroy the principles of the Reformation, which at this time threatened to overthrow Popery, and made the great crowned priest tremble for his craft. Thus, in sending back the Duke of Savoy, they armed him with a dagger, and forced him to promise that he would plunge it into the hearts of the most faithful of his subjects. We would fain believe, with these ever-dutiful subjects, that the heart of the young prince revolted against the edict to which he set his seal, commanding all his subjects to “attend mass on pain of death.” To carry out the execution of this cruel mandate, the duke appointed a prince of the blood, Philip of Raconis, joining in commission with him the Count de la Trinità, and Jacome, Inquisitor-General. There was also a legal adviser of the name of Corbis, an honourable and merciful man, who shortly gave up his commission, declaring he was unable to sanction the scenes of cruelty he was called on to witness.

We are obliged to pass over the atrocities committed by this odious triumvirate in the vicinity of the valleys. But at length the thunder, which had rolled awfully in the distance, approached “the ancient fortress of evangelical truth;” and accounts from all sides of devastation, murder, rapine, and crime, prepared its defenders for the fate that awaited them.

And how did they meet it? By flight?—by surrender?—by apostasy? No,—with that union of wise forethought and calm dependence which has always characterized their proceedings in the moment of peril. The *barbes* and principal inhabitants met in council; and first they sought by earnest prayer the direction of the Holy Spirit, which the wisdom of their resolves proved that they did not seek in vain. Their next care was to draw up memorials to send to the duke, and to his duchess whom they had reason

to hope was favourable to their cause. In that addressed to their sovereign they set forth their belief in the unadulterated gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, their loyal attachment to their rightful princes, and the unblamable tenor of their lives.

The letter addressed to the duchess was in another strain ; it seemed to imply on her part the acknowledgment of their innocence, and therefore implored her, after the example of Deborah, Judith, and Esther, to arise and vindicate the cause of her suffering people.

As it may be supposed, there was great difficulty in getting these addresses presented ; but after the failure of one of the deputies, the other, Gilles, a man of well-earned celebrity in the valleys, succeeded in placing them in the hands of the excellent Margaret, and receiving her promise to lay them before the duke. Her gentleman usher, Chassincourt, it is said, was so touched by the simple though firm answer which the Vaudois deputies made to his contemptuous reproaches, on their begging him to present their petitions, that he afterwards became a Protestant.

Whilst the men of the valley awaited with deep anxiety the issue of their negotiation, they were harassed by internal persecution. Two brothers, who had delivered up the colporteur Hector to be burned, and had obtained leave to raise a band of a hundred freebooters to " hunt the heretics," as they termed it, committed sad ravages in the commune of Rioclaret, of which they were the lords. They drove away the inhabitants, to perish with cold and hunger amongst the mountains, whilst they seized on their dwellings and provisions. They arrested their pastor and others, whom they had condemned to the flames, and would have burnt, had not four hundred of the Protestants from the valley of the

Clusone rushed to their rescue. Nor were these the only domestic foes of the Vaudois. Others, equally fierce, remained in the monks of Pinerolo, whose proceedings were marked by craft as well as cruelty. They kept a band of men in pay to watch the movements of the pastor and his flock in the nearest valley of Perosa. On one occasion they sent some of their spies to the pastor's house at San Germano, requesting his immediate attendance on a dying parishioner; the unsuspecting victim only perceived his danger when surrounded by a band of armed ruffians; and endeavouring, though in vain, to defend himself, he was wounded and carried off. His cries brought a few poor women to his assistance, who were also made prisoners, and—unalterable Rome!—were compelled to add to the scenic terror of the *auto da fé*, by carrying the wood for their minister's funeral pile!¹

In June, 1560, the Count de Raconis came a second time to the valleys. Emmanuel Philibert had prevailed on his hard taskmaster, the pope, to allow him to try gentler measures before proceeding to extremities with his *heretical* subjects; and he now empowered his cousin to beg that the Vaudois would discharge their own pastors, and hear the preachers sent by him. To the last proposition the Vaudois council replied instantly, "that if the duke's preachers spoke the pure Word of God, they would hear them; if otherwise, they would not." On the first proposition a day's consideration enabled them thus discreetly to reply "that they could not withdraw their own pastors until they knew whether those sent by their prince were the true servants of God, and ministers of His gospel."

Thus much had the pope conceded; but when the Duke of Savoy pleaded for the right of holding conferences, in

¹ *Storia d'Italia*, t. ii., p. 423.

which well-informed Roman Catholics might demonstrate the truths of their religion and the errors of dissent, the pontiff replied "that he would never consent to make the points of his religion matters of debate, and that nothing remained but to proceed with the utmost rigour against the heretics." For the more effectual carrying out of this he offered his aid—assistance as freely accorded as promised ; and the chief expense of the approaching crusade was borne by the Roman pontiff, who, besides the relinquishment for one year of his Piedmontese ecclesiastical revenue, furnished fifty thousand dollars monthly during its continuance.¹

After the despatch of their messengers to Nice, the Vaudois, expecting little result by their pleadings, proceeded to make other preparations. They met often in council, "and being convinced that God alone could deliver them, they decided not to countenance any measure that would be prejudicial to His honour or opposed to His Word ;" and having solemnly adjured every one to repentance and prayer, they proceeded to make active arrangements for the reception of the enemy and the safety of the community. For this purpose each family was directed to collect their provisions, clothes, and utensils, and carry them, together with the helpless and infirm, to their highest and least accessible dwellings. In October, when surer tidings reached them of the approach of the army, they held a public fast, and on the Sabbath that followed partook of the Lord's Supper. At this solemn period the people were evidently strengthened from on high to meet the trials in reserve for them. In their cottages, and on the mountain paths over which they were removing their little possessions, they were to be heard supporting one another

¹ Gilles, chap. xviii., p. 150.

with lessons of endurance and songs of spiritual encouragement. But the Protestants were not the only refugees on the approach of the invading army; their Roman Catholic neighbours confided their wives and daughters to their honourable keeping, as a security against the licentious defenders of their own faith.

On the fatal 1st of November, 1560, the Count de la Trinità entered the valleys at the head of an army of veteran soldiers, numbering, at the most moderate computation, four thousand infantry and two hundred cavalry. Opposed to these we find a band of twelve hundred mountaineers, strong only in the justice of their cause and the favour of their God. La Trinità (who, the pastor Lentullus, in a letter written at this time to Geneva, justly remarks, "should rather be called *Tyranita*") commenced his attack the next day on the heights of Angrogna. His aim was to seize the mountain eagle in its eyrie; and yet it is said, as he passed the "Tompie Saquet" the chieftain paused, and showed evident signs of irresolution. Perhaps the gurgle of the water reminded him of the death-struggle of the blaspheming Goliath who perished in the eddying waves. It is further reported that a Roman Catholic countrywoman passing the spot thus accosted him, "Sir, if your religion is the best, you will return victorious; but if those you attack are the servants of God, they will prevail." These were bold words to address to the powerful invader; but there are moments when conscience renders the most violent passive; and the after events of that day might have brought the casual remark of the passer-by again to mind.

At the first onset, two hundred Angrognians repelled the attack of twelve hundred picked men of the enemy, who sounded a retreat, leaving sixty dead on the mountain side,

whilst only three of the brave Vaudois were slain. Two days after, La Trinità, who had so placed his troops that they could attack on all sides, made another desperate attempt to gain possession of La Comb, a village commanding Villaro; but here, too, he was repulsed, and his men retreated with loss, as they did from a subsequent attack on the other side of La Torre. And now, perceiving they could make no progress in open warfare, La Trinità endeavoured to attack these upright people with weapons they knew not how to parry. By flattery and false promises he prevailed on the Angrognians to place their arms in his keeping, and to send their principal persons on an embassy of pacification to the duke at Nice. Thus he lulled suspicion and gained time, whilst his troops ravaged the country in all directions unchecked; until, having destroyed all the fruits of the earth which he could not carry away, and, moreover, exacted a tribute of fifteen thousand crowns from the impoverished natives, he withdrew his army into winter quarters on the plain, leaving the garrisons of La Torre, Perosa, and Perrero strongly manned. The cruelties committed by these soldiers we dare not attempt to describe. One touching instance is related by the historian Gilles.

Among the multitudes who fled or were removed to "caves and dens of the earth," were a helpless old man, who had lived a hundred and three years in this world of woe, and his blooming granddaughter, who had just seen seventeen summers. The old man had probably been placed in this cavern by his children, and his grandchild left to nurse and bear him company. Here they were hunted out by some of the enemy's soldiers, who murdered the poor old man; but the heroic girl, escaping from their brutal pursuit, "leaped from the precipice—and died." Tradition has embellished the

incident with one of her fairy touches, and tells us that the maiden sang, as she floated down the stream, a verse of some favourite hymn, and that still, at morning's dawn or evening's close, the same sweet strain is heard by those who lead their goats to graze at the foot of the "Maiden's Rock."

When the Vaudois deputies returned from their bootless errand, their melancholy looks betrayed, ere their tongues gave utterance to, the dreadful intelligence they brought. They had met with rough treatment, and returned to their countrymen with an order from their prince, forced from him by the pope, "either to receive the Romish priests and the mass, or to suffer entire extermination."

This alternative, by putting an end to all hesitation, invigorated rather than depressed the inhabitants of the valleys. They rejected the proposal with firmness, using it only as a quickening to their conscience for past concessions. They recalled their pastors, held Divine service again in public, and pulled down the images which they had tacitly allowed in their church at Bobbio. Everywhere the same resolution was evinced,—to suffer everything rather than swerve from the faith of their forefathers.

In this hour of trial the pastors received the most affectionate letters from their Christian brethren at a distance; whilst those in the neighbouring valley of the Clusone, subjects of the French king, proposed to enter into a bond of union, by which each party should make common cause whenever their ancient Church was attacked.

This bond was solemnly ratified; and one of its firstfruits was the enrolling of a band of a hundred chosen men, who were to be ready to hasten to any spot where danger was apprehended; hence the name of "the flying company." Two pastors were appointed to remind this selected band of

the duties of Christian soldiers, to check excess, and regularly to celebrate the services of their Church.

La Trinità left his winter quarters, and arrived a second time with his army on the 2nd of February, 1561. Again, but this time in vain, having endeavoured to entangle the Vaudois in a deceptive treaty, he commenced his attack, with the accumulated fury of disappointment and revenge, on the stronghold of the refugees. His first sally was unsuccessful; the next, made with additional forces, which attacked all sides of the mountainous enclosures, placed him, though with considerable loss, in possession of the lower valley of Angrogna, which he ravaged with fire and sword.

After two days of preparation, the enemy again commenced an attack on three sides of the funnel-shaped hollow of Pra del Tor; whilst one party endeavoured to force the Barricata, a narrow pass between the torrent and the overhanging rocks, another attacked the foot of the steep sides of the Rocciailla and the third directed their efforts to force a passage over the heights of San Martino.

A feigned attack on the opposite side having drawn off the most effective portion of the Vaudois, what was the terror of the defenceless band in the hollow of Pra del Tor, when they perceived the armed soldiers of the enemy descending the mountains above, like hungry wolves eager to prey on the unguarded flock! Still they did not lose their self-possession. Some of the young and agile bounded over the rocks and precipitous defiles, to fetch back their absent defenders; the old and weak knelt on the sod imploring protection and succour from the Lord of hosts; and a little band of *thirty* men advanced to meet the invaders. But see! "the flying company," bounding over every impediment, come rushing up the steep sides of the mountain, as if their feet were

winged. Victorious from another fight, they overtake their countrymen, and then, in sight of the advancing foe, prostrate on the mountain side, they pray together for strength to grapple with their adversaries. What but the strength they prayed for could have given such irresistible force to their onslaught? The panic-struck enemy fled before this army of Gideon like chaff before the tempest; and ever and anon as they turned, burning with shame and revenge, terrified anew by the fiery courage of their opponents, they were yet more widely scattered, only to be met again at each turning by the powerful and practised mountaineers. The slaughter was considerable, and would have been far greater had not the chaplains of the "flying company" interfered to check it, and their voices pleading for mercy amid the din of war, sheathed the avenging sword.

The cruel Charles, Lord of Rioclairet, paid that day the penalty of his former outrages; he deserved no quarter from the vassals whom he had delighted to persecute, and he found none. Neither did the ruffian band whom he had hired to do his cruel bidding protect him; when a sling struck him to the ground, they deserted him, and his head was cut off with his own sword. Another chief officer, Louis de Monteil, is recorded to have met his doom on that day also. He early fled from the combat, but not soon enough to escape pursuit or punishment; he was overtaken by a youth of eighteen, and slain.

Ah, there was joy and thanksgiving amongst the mountains that eve! The voice of prayer, indeed, had never ceased to echo through their caverned sides from the dawn until the decline of that memorable day. The pastors, and all who were not called on to bear a hand in the fight, ceased not to raise their voices in supplication; and never did

Jehovah work out a greater deliverance for His chosen people than that He then vouchsafed for His "Israel of the Alps."

It would not suit the brevity of these sketches to follow out in detail the subsequent victories of the Vaudois over their numerous but disheartened invaders, until even *they* exclaimed, "God fights for them!" Nor will we enter now on those instances of cruelty which were practised by La Trinità and his followers. It appears that, notwithstanding large reinforcements of troops from France and Piedmont had arrived in the valleys, the count drew off his forces to the plain, there to plan fresh inroads, and threaten universal extermination in the coming spring. But a hand was laid on him against which there was no revolting, and a dangerous illness silenced for a time his boastings.

Profiting by this release, the Vaudois renewed their negotiations with the Count of Raconis, the duke's cousin, who had always shown a pacific tendency, and now proved it by transmitting their petition to the Duchess Margaret, to whose pleadings the Vaudois attributed the favourable issue of the negotiation.

Thus was this persecuting warfare, which had lasted fifteen months, ended, and "the Men of the Valleys" restored, under certain restrictions, to their former privilege of worshipping God after the manner of their forefathers.

The concessions made by Emmanuel Philibert were greatly censured, and therefore redound greatly to his honour. The pope called it "a dangerous example;" the Roman Catholic historian, "a blameable weakness;" and the monks laboured hard to set aside that article of the treaty which guaranteed the liberation of prisoners, and the restitution of pillaged goods; but the matter having been reported to the good Margaret by Philip of Savoy, that

excellent princess, after consulting with the pastor Noel of Angrogna, obtained the strict execution of the treaty.

Although the tempest of war had rolled past the Vaudois valleys, peace brought the lacerated inhabitants but little relief. Like the slanting rays of the sun struggling through the storm-cloud, it served but to render more visible the desolation of all around:—ruined harvests, uprooted trees, roofless houses, and the yet more devastating ravages of the foe in the circle of domestic union. The aged and helpless, it is true, crept out once more into the bright sunshine, but it was to seek in vain for the homes which once sheltered them, the trees under whose shade they had reposed during the noonday heat, the garden, the corn-field, the vineyard—all that had fed, sustained, and cheered them, were but a heap of ruins. And even when stouter hands had relaid the roof-tree and restored a little order around, how many a loved one who had formerly sat beneath it was now found wanting! The father and son had fallen side by side in defence of their homesteads and their altars; the feeble at each of life's extremities had sunk amid alarm and privation; and there were others missing in many a family gathering, whose fate it were agony to dwell on, or even to conjecture. Moreover, when the sad remnant would willingly have bent the sword into a ploughshare, the sowing-time was past, and that of harvest, which was fast approaching, could be expected to yield but little fruit, since none but the highest and least productive ground had been tilled. In this emergency their Christian brethren, headed by Calvin, came promptly forward. Collections were made in all Protestant countries; the list was headed by the Elector Palatine, who in addition addressed an autograph letter to the Duke of Savoy, a copy of which has been preserved in the volumes of

Gilles; but it deserves to be engraved on more enduring marble. We are not told what effect these burning words had on the duke; but, joined to the remonstrances of the "Pearl of Valois," his amiable duchess, they may have saved the Vaudois of the valleys from that exterminating persecution which, as we have seen, entirely destroyed their colonies

Calabria and Provence. It might also have been the means of their exemption from that bloody tragedy, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, which took place soon after this period; but, as the Vaudois had no share in that event, beyond the grief caused by the loss of so many of their friends and co-religionists, we are happily relieved from the pain of relating the distressing particulars.

M. Birague, governor of the Marquisate of Saluzzo, it is true, had received orders to put all the members of the Reformed Church to death; but, with the concurrence of the archdeacon, he had the humanity to delay the execution of the mandate, and a regal message arrived soon after to stop it. The following courageous letter to Charles IX. was written by the Governor of Auvergne (how happy would it have been for that unfortunate monarch if he had possessed more such agents!): "SIRE,—I have received an order under your majesty's seal to put to death all the Protestants in my province. I respect your majesty too much not to think these letters are forged; and if, which God forbid, the order has indeed come from you, I have too great a respect for you to obey it."¹

A long period of external peace now ensued, though, as usual, disturbed by internal persecutions and annoyances, so unremitting, that, like "insect vexations," if the wounds were not so deep, their stings were equally venomous and destruc-

¹ *Essai sur les Guerres Civiles de France*, Genève, vol. xvi., p. 142.

tive of repose. The monks were ever on their untiring wings, buzzing about them, and turning their slightest movements against them. They were constantly oppressed by the resident lords and appointed governors. One of these, named Castrocara, was a dreadful scourge; and though he was



TORRE PELLICE, FROM THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE RIVER.

placed in prison for maladministration on the accession of Charles Emmanuel, he had enjoyed the patronage of his father, and even of the Duchess Margaret. This latter, the kind friend of the Vaudois, died in 1574.

In 1592 the Vaudois were called to show their loyalty and courage in the army of their young sovereign, who, on

passing through Luserna, when retaking possession of the valleys, which had been in the hands of the French, encouraged them with these words, "Be faithful to me, and I will be a good prince, and even a good father to you ; as to liberty of conscience and the exercise of your religion, I wish to make no innovation," etc. Notwithstanding these good intentions, the young duke could not prevent a swarm more buzzing and stinging than that of the French army from invading the valleys. Troops of monks and ecclesiastics of all orders and degrees, headed by the Archbishop of Turin, besieged the poor Vaudois, denouncing, persuading, flattering, and threatening by turn, and all equally in vain. The rumour of a fresh invasion on the side of France set them happily to flight, and gave opportunity to the men of the valleys to prove their devotion to their prince, in their faithful guardianship of the mountain passes which he committed to their defence. Two years later the arrival of a conquering army under Marshal Schomberg obliged both Protestant and Papist to submit to foreign dominion ; but as, during the year in which they occupied the country, they granted to the adherents of the Reformed religion the free exercise of it, their presence would have caused no additional evil beyond the passing and repassing of troops, had they not been the instruments of one of the severest trials which this long-suffering people had been yet called on to endure.

Leaving the particulars of this scourge for a few pages further on, let us now take a glance once more into the prisons of the Inquisition, and relate some of those affecting instances of trial and endurance which are so abundantly furnished, even in times of comparative peace. In selecting the history of the beautiful Octavia Sollara, it is rather with

a view to the present than the past; her fate is one that is still realized by many of our own countrywomen in those unequal marriages which are but too common amongst us; the misery of which will be felt in proportion as the parties are sensible of the value of their own religion, and desirous of the eternal welfare of those dearest to them.

Amongst the many victims of persecution, and firm supporters of the Reformed faith, was a nobleman of the name of Sollara, in the south of Piedmont, whose only child, a beautiful and accomplished girl, was addressed by a powerful and wealthy suitor of the Romish faith. The historian relates the story with his usual simplicity, and he is doubtless the pastor to whom the Lady Octavia applied in her doubts respecting her acceptance of the Count de Cavour. The temptations, no doubt, were great. The noble suitor promised to use his interest in effecting the restitution of her father's possessions, to place her in a situation in which she might exercise her power and wealth for the benefit of her persecuted co-religionists, and, furthermore, gave his word never to interfere with her religious principles. But the pastor was not deceived by these dazzling offers, and he gave the young inquirer the simple advice uttered long before by apostolic authority, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." And though this advice was given in vain, the evils he foresaw and predicted were but too surely verified. Octavia became the wife of the Count de Cavour, and soon discovered how Roman Catholics keep their faith with those they term heretics. Her husband deprived her of all her religious privileges, even taking from her the Bible and her devotional books; so that the promise she had made to her pastor of publicly confessing her religion was never fulfilled, and all the advantages to others which had

been contemplated by this questionable step were never reaped by them or herself. The struggles and trials of the young Vaudois have never been disclosed. Her husband always spoke of her as exemplary in all respects but one, and as being on that one immoveable. But who shall say to what she had been subjected in the maintenance of that resolution and the purity of that faith? Denied all communication with her pastor, all solace from social worship, all consolation from the Word of her God, the young and beautiful victim fell into a low melancholy, which brought her slowly to her end. A short time before her death a female friend expressed a hope that she might yet be restored to health. "Pray not for my recovery," said she; "rather implore the Almighty to take me from the world while I am yet true to my crucified Saviour, and before weakness of mind or body shall reduce me to a state in which I may be so lost as to deny the Lord who bought me."

The letters written by our fellow-creatures under circumstances of excitement or trial have always a certain interest, as we feel that they are the genuine expressions of the sentiments with which the heart of the writer is full. Here is one written by a poor Waldensian tradesman from his prison, in which, after two years of solitary confinement, he died. His crime was one of the first magnitude in those days—he was a Vaudois; and being, in the course of his business, at a fair at Asti, in Piedmont, he had the imprudence to confess his faith, and, led on at supper by the artful questions of some of the guests, to deny his belief in transubstantiation. He was seized, imprisoned, and when found dead in his cell, his poor emaciated remains were publicly burnt. The following letter is addressed to his wife, from whom he had been allowed to receive a visit in his cell :

“ TO MY LOVING COMPANION, SUSAN COPIN, AT THE TOWER
OF LUSERNA.

“ MOST DEAR COMPANION,—I have received much comfort by your coming to this place, and so much the more by how much the less I expected it ; and I think it was some comfort to yourself that you had the means to sup with me, as it came to pass yesterday, being the 15th of September in the year 1601, being Saturday. I know not the cause why this was permitted ; but all things are in the hand of God, and whatsoever was the cause, I do not think we shall ever eat together again. Therefore pray unto God to be your comforter, and put your trust in Him, who has promised never to forsake those who trust in Him. You are wise, therefore govern our house in such sort that you keep our children, Samuel and Martha, in obedience ; whom I command, by that authority that God hath given unto me, to be faithful and obedient unto you, for then God will bless them. For the rest, be not grieved concerning myself ; for if God hath appointed that I am to come to the end of my days, and if it pleaseth the Almighty God that I shall render up my soul, which He hath long time lent me, my trust in Him is that out of His abundant mercy He will receive it into heaven, for the love of His Son Christ Jesus, by whom I believe that our sins are blotted out, even by His precious death and passion ; and I beg at His merciful hands that He will accompany me unto the end, by the merciful assistance of His Holy Spirit. Be always careful to pray unto God, and to serve Him, for so God will bless you. Take no heed to send me anything for these three weeks ; and then you may send me, if you please, some money to pay the jailer, and something else to succour me if I live till then. Remember

also that which I have often told you, that is, that God prolonged the life of King Ezekias for fifteen years, but that He hath prolonged mine a deal more, for it is a long time ago that you have seen me in a manner dead ; nevertheless I am yet alive, and I hope, and hold for certain, that He will still preserve me alive, until my death shall be better for His glory, and mine own felicity, through His grace and mercy towards me.

“From the prison at Asti, September 16, 1601.”

There are several other episodes of touching interest on record—some of conversion, even under the roof of the persecutor, Bersour. One of his sons was so edified by the testimony borne and the arguments used by the prisoners brought in crowds to his father's castle, that he became a convert to the truth, together with his wife ; and both, in testimony of it, suffered gladly the loss of their worldly possessions and honours. In the valley of Saluzzo we read of the French regiments who were quartered amongst them sharing the feelings of these proscribed people—of persons of rank and influence retiring from idolatrous ceremonies to read the Scriptures and pray in secret, among whom were a skilful physician of the name of Goz, and his brother, an eminent lawyer.

And we read too, alas ! of backsliders, poor wretches who shrank before the torture, or yielded to the flattery of a foe who could take all forms to deceive. But almost all who fell in the moment of trial came back, with bitter repentance and shame, to solicit leave to return to the faith they had never inwardly abjured. Such repentance appears to us as a triumph of considerate faith over the sudden and irresistible weakness of the flesh, and to be scarcely less

admirable than the unflinching constancy of the unsubdued martyr. One passage of this kind, related of two of the Vaudois pastors, is exceedingly affecting, and the spot where the incident occurred is still pointed out to the traveller. It is called Pinache d'Envers, and is situated a few miles above the village of San Germano. The situation is wild and sad, the heights that tower above it shut out the sun, and are clothed to the top by dark pine forests. Here, after a time of suffering, the remnant of the slaughtered saints met to worship God under the only temple left them, the canopy of the blue sky above.

At one of these holy meetings two penitents appeared, two wretched men, emaciated by long confinement and bitter grief, and were received with the pity due to their weakness and their misfortunes. They were two Vaudois pastors, who having been taken prisoners to Turin, had abjured their religion under the protracted tortures of the rack, and came to confess their sin, and to pray once more to be restored to the Church of their forefathers. Who is there that could answer for standing against the battery of torture? who is there but feels that such repentance is almost more valuable than the virtue of those who have never fallen, because they have never been exposed to such fiery temptation?

And now we come to the relation of that dreadful pestilence which followed the occupation by the French army in 1630. The first cases occurred in the beginning of May. The pastors met to consult on the best steps to be taken,—theirs was no inactive faith. Submissive under the heaviest calamities, they neglected no means of prevention or remedy; and after providing medicine and other assistance for the sick and needy, they turned with fasting and humiliation to God,

whom, with Job, they could address, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

But the destroying angel was not arrested even by the prayers of the saints of the Most High—he passed not over the doorposts of the Israel of the Alps, for not one house was to be found untenanted by the dying or the dead. Famine added its ravages to those of the plague, and the excessive heat of the weather increased the general suffering.

As we trace the various trials of this remarkable people, we seem, even to ourselves, to be carried beyond the bounds of truth ; and yet more, as we relate the unwavering faith and patience with which they supported their unprecedented trials do we place a check on our own feelings, and rigidly sift the evidence, amply afforded in testimony, of all we have related.

The pastors were, as all pastors should be, foremost in danger, pre-eminent in faith, unwearied in good works. In the expressive words of one of their historians.¹ "They multiplied themselves by their redoubled zeal in the discharge of their duties." They travelled from village to village, preached in the open air to the healthy, and prayed beside the dying ; and as they were foremost in duty, so were they, alas ! most eminent in suffering. One by one they fell a sacrifice—no, let us rather say they were called to their reward. Four of these faithful shepherds were smitten at the commencement of the pestilence ; seven others died in the following month ; and the twelfth expired as he was preparing for his journey to Geneva in search of pastoral aid. Gilles, the historian and minister, lost four promising sons. But let us not, amongst the philanthropic band, forget to enumerate a

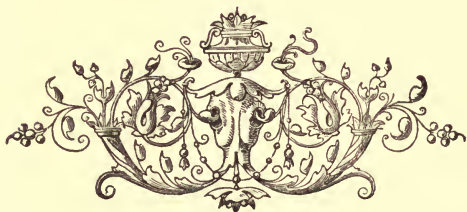
¹ Monastier.

Roman Catholic physician of the name of Goz, whose labours were most abundant and self-sacrificing, for, in addition to that of infection, he ran the risk of excommunication from his Church for the aid he afforded to the dying Protestants. The Roman Catholics hoped, perhaps, that the plague would have spared them all further trouble; and, indeed, it almost destroyed all that the war and the Inquisition had left, as it is computed that three-fourths, certainly two-thirds, of the inhabitants of the valleys were carried off by its ravages. Famine, as we have said, increased the mortality. The corn remained uncut in the fields, the grapes hung withering on the vines, whilst the air was so tainted by the dead who lay unburied on the mountain paths, that the passer-by was often seen to fall down lifeless at their side.

One precious fruit grew and ripened amid the withering of all beside—the fruit of righteousness. Instead, as we have too often read in similar visitations, of the people giving themselves up to lawless recklessness, the zeal of his countrymen, says Gilles, “ was manifested in their great desire to be present at the preaching, here and there, in the open country; and every one marvelled and gave praise to God for the help He vouchsafed us amid such sharp and terrible afflictions.”

And now the pastors, having been all carried off excepting four, one of whom was a very aged man, determined to recall the pastor, Antoine Léger, the historian's uncle, from Constantinople, and to apply to those friends in every time of need, their Swiss co-religionists, for ministers to supply the place of those whom death had taken from them. This brought about a great change in the Vaudois Church, not only in assimilating her ritual to that of the Genevan, but also in introducing the French language instead of that of

their native Italian. We own we feel this to be a matter of regret, as well as the substituted title of "Monsieur le Ministre" for the simple and affectionate appellation of "*Barba*," so suited to the tastes and manners of the primitive Church of the Valleys. But such changes were the natural effects of the afflictive circumstance which obliged the Vaudois Church to apply to her sister of Geneva for the help so promptly and courageously rendered by her intrepid ministers.





CHAPTER X.

The Slaughtered Church.

THE PERSECUTIONS OF THE PROPAGANDA, AND THE SLAUGHTER
OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE VAUDOIS VALLEYS BY
THE ARMIES OF FRANCE AND PIEDMONT.



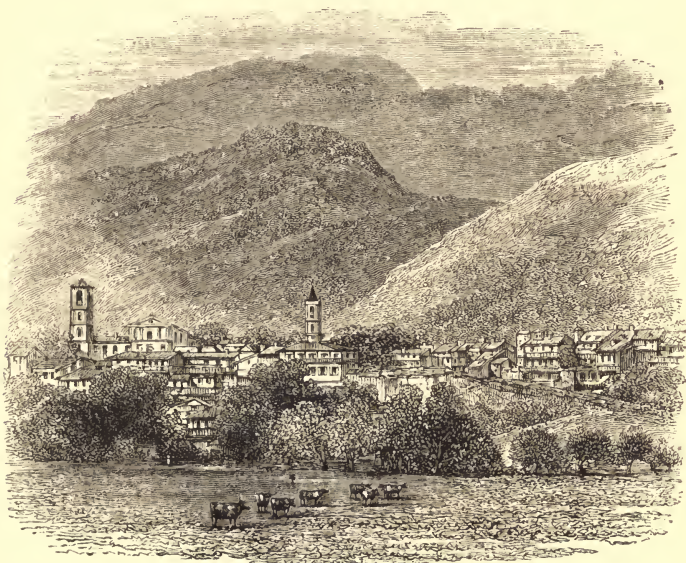
IN 1637 the short reign of Victor Amadeus I. terminated with his life, and the Duchess Christina, sister of Louis XIII., was nominated regent during the minority of her son, Charles Emmanuel II. Unlike her relative the good Princess Margaret, Christina evinced from the first a spirit of persecution against her Vaudois subjects. Nothing seems to have softened the heart of this cruel bigot. Even when the men of the valleys, ever ready in the defence of their lawful sovereigns, espoused the cause of her son, of whom the guardianship was disputed by his uncles, and took up arms in his defence, she showed neither gratitude nor compunction. One sentence had gone out against them, which no services on

their part could repeal; and a formidable tribunal, as yet stealthy and concealed, was assembling in every kingdom which owned the supremacy of Rome, determined, heart and hand, to enforce its most rigid execution—the sentence of exile and death, unless averted by submission and apostasy.

This tribunal, as celebrated for the power and rank of its members as for the cruelty of its proceedings, was styled, “The Council for the Propagation of the Faith, and the Extirpation of Heretics.” It was composed of members of both sexes, and held its seat at Turin, in the palace of the archbishop, who presided over one committee, whilst the Marchioness of Pianezza, a meet helpmate for her cruel and crafty husband, took the lead in the other.

The first proceeding of this awful tribunal was an edict of exile against the Vaudois of Saluzzo, which left them no alternative but Popery. They did not hesitate, but left their long-cherished home to seek one amongst their brethren of Luserna, who threw open their doors and their arms to shelter them. They were scarcely domesticated amongst them, when they found all return was cut off by the utter destruction of their dwellings by the monks of Paisana. And now began a series of subtle machinations set on foot by the monks and spies of the Propaganda’s introduction, who endeavoured by every art, and once too successfully, to excite the unsuspecting Vaudois to some acts of opposition, in order to justify the extremity of their punishments: thus a creature of the Marquis of Pianezza, named Villeneuve, contrived to inveigle the pastor of Villars and his wife into a concerted plan for opposing the settlement of a colony of monks in their parish; and the latter carried her misguided zeal so far as to furnish some matches for the burning of their monastery.

Léger, at that time moderator, flew, like Moses, to avert the consequences of this rash act, to protest before the magistrates his innocence and that of his colleagues, and to promise that the guilty should be given up to justice, whilst at the same time he prayed for immunity for the innocent—alas! in vain.



VILLARS, VAL PELLICE.

The Count Tedesco, whilst the men of Villars and its adjacents were, as was their custom, at the market of Luserna, arrived at the gates of the guilty town at the head of two hundred horse, followed by other troops. And who now was to save the devoted inhabitants?—the interposition of Heaven alone. Torrents of rain so completely soaked the accoutre-

ments of the assailants, that a band of five-and-twenty of the besieged, flanked by the steep declivities of the valley, forced them to retire.

The Vaudois were the next day in arms. The council assembled: some of the deputies advised submission, but the superior sagacity of Léger, which convinced him that to yield was only to place the knife in the executioner's hands, prevailed, and the ultimate determination was to defend themselves even unto death. And Léger was right; this determined posture gained them a reprieve for a few years from open attack; though many were the instances of private struggle against the injustice of their governors and the undermining craftiness of their agents—too many for recapitulation without endangering the clearness of the narrative, and perhaps exhausting the interest if not the patience of the reader.

On the 25th of January the edict of exile again went forth, calling on the inhabitants of Luserna, Lusernetta, San Giovanni, La Torre, etc., to leave their fertile valley, and to retreat further into the mountains, thus obliging them to solicit the charity they had so bountifully bestowed on their exiled brethren of Saluzzo.

On that day Gastaldo, an officer of the State, proclaimed the inhuman decree that "such persons as refused to obey these orders, and were found beyond the prescribed limits, would incur the penalty of death and the confiscation of all their property, unless within the next twenty days they declared that they were Catholics, or had disposed of their property to such." Thus these poor people were to leave the fairest part of the Vaudois inheritance, the land in which, as their remonstrance to their sovereign expressed, "they had dwelt from time immemorial," to quit it in three days under

penalty of death, or with one alternative, to which death would be preferable. And did they go?—leave in that brief period their beautiful abodes, round which the vine hung its clustering fruit—leave the shade of their chestnut groves, the hearths of their forefathers, the temple of their God? They did. Headed by their pastor they went forth; the mother with her children; the father bearing on his shoulders the household articles of most value and utility, unless, as was often the case, these were left behind to take instead a more cherished freight, some aged parent or helpless invalid. Their pastor, the historian Léger, speaks in his history with admiring wonder that of all his flock, numbering nearly two thousand, not one accepted the alternative of Rome.

We need scarcely say they were received with true Christian hospitality by their brethren. No cabin, however crowded, but could find room for the cherished exiles. The dish of polenta was replenished; the chestnuts and the dainties of the dairy were freely shared, and the tear of sympathy accompanied the offerings of charity. Nor did the Vaudois fail to petition against the injustice of their sentence; they sent letters to all in authority; but the ear of their prince was closed against them by the misrepresentations of their enemies; and whilst the crafty Pianezza appointed a day to receive their deputies, he had predetermined, ere it arrived, to take measures to render all remonstrance vain.

On the night of the 27th of April, 1655, this perfidious man secretly departed from Turin to join his army, consisting of fifteen thousand men, which, by the efforts of the Propaganda, had been enrolled for the extirpation of the poor men of the valleys. These troops, which now took possession of that part of their territory from which the inhabitants, as we have seen, had been forcibly ejected, were a mixed multitude, but

selected with admirable adaptation to the service for which they were engaged. The larger number were Piedmontese, burning with hatred against the creed and persons of their fellow-subjects, and panting to retaliate the numerous defeats they had sustained at their hands. Three regiments of French soldiers, whose hands were crimsoned with the blood of the Huguenots, had crossed the Alps, at Charles Emmanuel's particular request, to join the crusade against his own subjects, which was further swollen by some Bavarian troops, and a band of one thousand two hundred Irish outlaws, who had been banished by Cromwell for the part they played in the murder of their Protestant fellow-countrymen—that *Irish St. Bartholomew*, in which forty thousand victims of all ages were immolated.¹ In addition to these practised assassins, a rabble rout followed their camp, drawn by the hope of plunder and the promise of absolution. With such actors we may in some measure be prepared for the tragedy which followed.

But guilt is ever cowardly, and the captain of this great host trembled before a handful of resolute mountaineers. After a few days' desultory warfare on the skirts of the valley, in which these brave men repelled the invaders as the flinty rock throws back the surging billow, the Marquis of Pianezza changed his plan of attack, shrunk from open warfare, and took refuge in treachery and falsehood. He protested "he had entered the valleys only in pursuit of a few delinquents who had resisted the edict of Gastaldo, and that none else had cause for fear if they would for a short time, in obedience to the wishes of their prince, *allow a few regiments to be quartered in their several parishes.*" We cannot acquit the deputies of a want of prudence in yielding to

¹ Hume's *History*, chap. lv.

these specious pretences, more especially as the moderator Léger, and other of their advisers, did all they could to prevent them. The issue is easily divined : Pianezza's troops took possession of the country, spread themselves over the plains, hung on the heights, occupied the towns and villages, filled every valley, *and on the 27th of April, the signal having been given from the rocks of Castelluzzo, the fifteen thousand executioners of the Propaganda commenced a universal massacre.*

“Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
E'en them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in Thy book record their groans
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they to heaven.”¹

The burning language of the poet and the Christian has thus depicted the slaughter that followed the entrance of Pianezza's ruffians. We next borrow the scarcely less eloquent account of Léger, himself an eye-witness of the horrors he relates :

“The signal having been given from a hill near La Torre, named Castulus (now Castelluzzo), nearly the whole of those innocent beings who were in the power of these cannibals had their throats cut like sheep in a slaughterhouse. What do I say? they were not even put to the sword, like the vanquished to whom no quarter is given—not executed by the hands of the public executioner; no, such murders would not have sufficiently displayed the zeal of the general, nor gained renown enough for those who did his bidding.

¹ Milton's *Sonnet*.

“ Children, torn from their mothers’ breasts, were seized by the feet and dashed against the rocks or walls, which were covered with their brains, whilst their tender bodies were cast on the common heaps—or one soldier seizing one limb of these innocent creatures, and another taking hold of the other, would tear them asunder, beat their mothers with them, and at last throw them into the fields. The sick and aged, both men and women, were either burned in their houses or literally cut in pieces ; or, stripped of their garments, were tied up like a ball, with their heads between their legs, and rolled over rocks.”

But we will pursue the harrowing catalogue no longer, though still fouler cruelties remain, engraved on it by the hand of righteous indignation. We have fulfilled a painful duty in thus far detailing *some* of the fiendish facts, and will place no further violence on our own or our readers’ feelings by continuing the black disclosure. Let us plead in excuse for the harrowing detail, that truth must not be suppressed ; and the accuracy of Léger’s statements were verified by the witnesses who were brought forward to deny them. The court of Turin issued a manifesto, declaring them to be false ; but Pianezza having called on the commander of a French regiment, the Sieur du Petitbourg, whom he terms “ a man of honour, worthy of credit,” to refute the testimony of the historian Léger and others, that brave officer declared, and the declaration is still extant, “ that he resigned his commission that he might never again be witness to such disgraceful scenes.” “ I have been a witness,” he adds, “ of innumerable acts of violence and cruelty committed by the outlaws of Piedmont and the soldiers on persons of every age, sex, and condition, whom I have seen massacred, dismembered, hanged, etc., etc. When they brought prisoners to the

Marquis di Pianezza, I saw him give orders to kill them all, because his highness would not have persons of that religion in his dominions."

"It was then," exclaims Léger, "that the fugitives who had been snatched like brands out of the flames, could address God in the words of the 79th Psalm, which emphatically and literally describes their condition :

"O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance ;
Thy holy temple have they defiled ;
They have laid Jerusalem on heaps.
The dead bodies of Thy servants have they given
To be meat unto the fowls of the heaven,
The flesh of Thy saints
Unto the beasts of the earth.
Their blood have they shed like water, . . .
And there was none to bury them."

"Our tears are no longer of water," wrote some of those exiles to the Swiss evangelical cantons on the 29th of April, "they are of blood ; they do not merely obscure our sight, they choke our poor hearts ; our hands tremble, and our hearts are stunned by the blows we have received. Strangely troubled, moreover, by fresh alarms, and by the attacks made upon us, we are prevented from writing to you as we wish ; but we pray you to excuse us, and to collect amid our groans the meaning of what we fain would utter."

There is a dreadful "book of remembrance" kept against the perpetrators of these enormities—we refer not to those awful pages into which no human eye can penetrate, but will give an account of the book in question, with the anecdote appended to it taken from Dr. Gilly's valuable work.¹

¹ *Narrative of an Excursion to the Mountains of Piedmont*, pp. 213, 214, 4th edit.

“ The second part of Jean Léger’s very scarce work contains a history of the dreadful persecutions of 1655, and is embellished with plates, representing the tortures inflicted upon the Vaudois. The sight of these horrors, thus depicted, is enough to curdle the blood in the veins of any one who is not hardened by fanaticism against humanity ; and the plates are accompanied by attestations of the facts, which place the truth of them beyond all question. This book was shown to me by one of my excellent Vaudois friends, who observed the impression it made, and then said, ‘ That volume I never saw until I was twenty-four years of age, although it was in my father’s and grandfather’s possession ; nor have I permitted either of my own children to open a page of it. It is one of our maxims not to say or do anything which shall have the effect of exasperating the mind of our youth against our Roman Catholic brethren.’ Can there be a nobler sentiment of forbearance than this, or a more practical lesson upon the gospel doctrine of charity ?—‘ CHARITY SUFFERETH LONG, AND IS KIND ; IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED, THINKETH NO EVIL, BEARETH ALL THINGS, ENDURETH ALL THINGS. CHARITY NEVER FAILETH.’ ”

But the Vaudois flock were not all driven into the slaughterhouse and murdered without resistance. There were Gideons and Samsons amongst the men of the valleys, whose prowess was second only to that of the deliverers of Israel.

The commune of Rorà, the least of the parishes of Luserna, then numbering about twenty-five families, is situated amongst the mountain fastnesses, which seem to divide in order to form a safe and beautiful retreat, which is only approached to this day by paths of excessive steepness, bordering the precipitous sides of the acclivi-

ties which guard this celebrated natural fortress of Vaudois heroism.

We know not why this glen was at first left unoccupied by the enemy, unless it was left as a scourge for them,



VALLEY AND VILLAGE OF RORA.

and to exhibit in strong relief the strength of faith and patriotism.

But it was not overlooked ; for, contrary to his repeated assurances of safety and protection, the Count Christophe of

Luserna, their lord, secretly despatched a band of five hundred ruffians on the morning of the Vaudois massacre with hands, not figuratively, but actually red with the blood of these brethren, and steeped yet morally deeper in foul and brutalizing crime, to surprise the village and commune of Rorà.

But the shepherd of the flock did not slumber on that eventful day; the brave and prudent Janavel, who, with his family, had retired from the valley to these heights, was, with six others, keeping watch on the rocks, and looked keenly on the foe as they passed up the ascent. Undaunted by their number, they thought not of flight, but placing themselves in ambuscade, discharged their pieces with so true and calm an aim, that the first six soldiers in advance fell. Their followers, divided by the straitness of the path, retreated, affrighted at the hidden attack, leaving fifty-four dead on the path, or rolled down over the adjoining precipices.

When the poor people of Rorà betook themselves to Pianezza, both to apologize and remonstrate, he assured them that their assailants were only some irregular troops or lawless banditti, whom they acted right in repelling; and following out the rule of his Church, that no faith must be kept with heretics, he despatched the next day six hundred of his carefully selected men on the same errand, but by a different route.

However easily beguiled the mass of the Vaudois have in too many instances proved themselves to be, their whole history evidences their leaders, both ecclesiastic and military, to have united in a remarkable degree the two great qualities of heroic action—judgment and self-possession.

Janavel was not to be deceived by the promises or lulled by the flattery of his feudal lord. As soon might the moun-

tain eagle close her eyes or fold her wing when her eyrie was threatened by the invading huntsman, as the watchful guardian of his Rorà nest remove his gaze from the paths by which the foe advanced to rifle it.

Already had he collected herdsmen armed with defensive weapons,—six youthful Davids with sling and stone, and burning ardour, to attack the enemies of the living God. From their advantageous ambush a shower of balls and stones, not one of which failed of its deadly errand, fell on the cowardly invaders, who, as before, struck with terror, retreated in disorder, leaving sixty of their companions as corpses behind.

Again were the same lying assurances repeated by the general; and a third detachment of augmented numbers despatched to climb the rocky heights of Mount Racomer. This time the troops surrounded and burnt many houses in the deserted village, the inhabitants having fled for refuge to their rocks and caves. The hero and his companions, warily awaiting the moment when the foe, in false security, abandoned themselves to the lust of plunder, fell on them with such desperate resolve, that, by the blessing of God, they drove them back to La Torre, and recaptured a great deal of the spoil, which the flying miscreants abandoned on finding it impede their retreat.

A fourth and more formidable battle array was now set in order against the mountain fortress. It was arranged to consist of separate bands, which were to meet at a preconcerted place, and to be commanded by a captain noted for his ferocity, named Mario. Burning with the thirst of blood and plunder, Mario and his own peculiar followers, composed of the Irish troops, found themselves alone at the waiting post, and either too impatient to await the arrival of

the other parties, or greedy to gather alone the laurels of the enterprise, they rushed onwards—only to share the fate of the former assailants, to fly with shame, to fall by the bow and sling, or falling over the rocky precipices to be dashed on their sharp projections, and, finally bounding from steep to steep, to be plunged in the torrent below.

This last fate was Mario's. He was drawn alive out of the waters and carried to Luserna, where he expired a few days afterwards, in torments of body and mind, continually crying out that he "already experienced a foretaste of hell within him, on account of the houses, churches, and people he had burnt in that valley."

Alas ! a time approached when the most consummate prudence and chivalrous valour were of no avail. A letter was now sent by Pianezza to Rorà, "threatening the inhabitants, that unless they attended mass in twenty-four hours he would reduce their houses to ashes, and cut down their trees." To this they replied, "We prefer death a hundred times to the mass ; and if, after burning our houses, you should cut down our trees, we have a heavenly Father who will provide."

Pianezza at length condescended to collect *eight thousand* veteran troops, and to augment their number by adding two thousand Popish peasants, before he again ventured to attack five-and-twenty families of Vaudois mountaineers !

Victor Amadeus said that "the skin of every Vaudois cost him fifteen of his best Piedmontese soldiers ;" the ratio of Pianezza must have been multiplied by scores. This immense force was divided into three bands, which approached the village in different directions. Thus, while Janavel and his comrades were defending it one side, the others were left defenceless. We need not repeat the horrid particulars,

although we must notice some amongst the many instances of heroism shown by the victims. Discovered in their retreats, the wretched inhabitants underwent every ignominious outrage to which their brethren had been subjected. A hundred and ninety-six persons were thus immolated. Margaret, the sister of Janavel, and wife of Giuseppe Garniero, one of the mountain heroes, received a shot in her bosom as she was nursing her infant; but, nothing daunted, she ceased not to exhort her husband to continue his efforts, and to pray that her infant might not fall into the hands of the murderers. That mother's prayer was heard; though struck lifeless to the ground by another shot, her hold never relaxed, and three days after, the babe was found alive in her stiffened embrace. The wife and three daughters of Janavel were among the few prisoners spared alive by Pianezza; but this was no doubt in order to bring their heroic father into his power, Janavel having escaped with some of his most formidable companions.

Pianezza even offered him his life, and that of his wife and daughters, on the proviso of his changing his religion, threatening, if he persisted in his heresy, that the whole family should be burned. The Christian hero's answer was worthy his faith and his race: "There are no torments so painful, no death so barbarous, that I would not choose rather than abjure my God. If the Marquis di Pianezza cause my wife and daughters to pass through the fire, it can but consume their mortal bodies; their souls I commend, together with my own, to God, trusting He will have mercy on them, even should it be His pleasure that we should fall by the hand of the executioner."

We have visited the cottage fortress from which the Christian warrior sent this message of sublime confidence,

crept into the low vaulted passage whose walls still bear the inscription of his initials and the year of his escape ; and we felt as if treading on ground hallowed by the memory of one of the finest traits of Christian devotion that the page of history records.

The outlet is now choked ; but tradition reports, and is believed, that it led to a tunnelled path which conducted to a stage lower down the mountain ; and that under its cover, whilst the house was besieged from without, Janavel and his little son escaped.

Carrying this boy on his back, and accompanied by his faithful band, almost destitute of provisions as well as ammunition, he passed the snowy summit of the Alps ; and having placed his child at Queyras, in the French territory, returned to join the little army of Vaudois, which, after the massacre, had been collecting on the mountains above Bobbio. Here he found a kindred spirit in the heroic Jahier, and here with their little army, whose assembled force amounted to no more than five hundred men, they fought several defensive battles with the same, may we not term it *miraculous* success as attended those we have already described ? One of their most extraordinary exploits is thus related :

“ The two captains were soon in communication, and on the 28th of May united their forces on the little town of San Secondo (named after one of the early martyrs of pagan persecution), which was garrisoned with the Irish regiment, composed of seven or eight hundred men. Their assault was made with such vigour that they soon became masters of the town, and by an ingenious expedient were enabled to approach the positions which the enemy had fortified within it. In that country, where wine is made by every householder, and generally from the produce of his own vineyard,

each dwelling is supplied with a store of casks, and the Vaudois, collecting a number of these from the first houses they occupied, rolled them before them, and under their shelter gained without loss the gate of the principal fortress. Here



BOBBIO, VAL PELLICE.

they found a quantity of vine fagots, to which they set fire, and thus soon obtained an entrance. The garrison retreated to a great hall, but more lighted fagots being placed against the door, they recoiled from the fire and smoke, and thus,

unable to escape, and pressed together without the power of resistance, they were all put to the sword, with the loss of only seven of their assailants.”¹

Did the poor Irish, whilst suffering the just vengeance of the injured Protestants, recall other scenes in which, both at home and abroad, they had slaughtered the innocent—had imbrued their hands in the blood of age and infancy—had outraged innocence and virtue? No such stains followed the footsteps of these avengers of their country’s wrongs. No insult was offered to the wives and daughters of the conquered; their aged were respected, and their children unmolested; and the booty they collected was little else than the reclamation of their own property. Neither were the deaths they inflicted marked by any unnecessary cruelty—they slew only in self-defence; alas that such a necessity should have been laid on them!

In following the wonderful history of the Samsons of the valley, we find that after having repulsed three thousand of the enemy with a band of three hundred Vaudois, Janavel was unfortunately tempted, by the unexpected arrival of Jahier with his troop, to follow the retreating enemy into the plain, to leave their mountain eminences, and thus to pay the penalty of his rashness. Janavel fell after a fierce combat covered with wounds; and imagining them to be mortal, he sent for his brother chieftain, and before he allowed himself to be borne from the field, gave him some precautionary advice; more especially enforcing the necessity of a retreat for that day. Counsel too little heeded!

It appears that Jahier, besides the temptation of his own ardent spirit, was deceived by a traitorous guide, who, with the promise of disclosing some booty, led him and his chosen

¹ Wickham’s *Historical Sketch*, p. 137.

band of a hundred and fifty picked men into an ambush, where they were shortly surrounded by the Savoy cavalry, who were lying in wait for them. He fell—the hero with his son, fighting side by side, and all his brave companions, one only excepted. But it was a dear victory to the enemy in point of numbers, though their whole army was not to be weighed against such. Léger gives the following character of Jahier :

“ This great captain is certainly worthy to be remembered for the great zeal which he always showed for the service of God and the support of His cause. His constancy was never shaken either by promises or threats ; though he possessed the courage of a lion, he was as humble as a lamb, always giving to God the glory of his victories, well versed in Scripture and understanding controversy, and of great natural talent : his character would have been faultless had he known how to curb his adventurous spirit.”

Amid the mourning for the loss of one, and the disablement of the other of their valiant captains, the Vaudois were cheered by the support of a brother of Jahier, as well as by that of Captain Laureat, and other heroes of the soil ; whilst many of their brethren from Languedoc and Dauphiny came to their aid. One of these, the brave and experienced Descombies, afterwards became their chief commander. The renowned Colonel Adrion from Geneva also joined them, with M. de Barcelona from the Pays de Vaud.

With these reinforcements the men of the valleys continued with unabated courage to defend their position, and, at the same time, with so much loss and discouragement to the enemy, that some of them began to acknowledge that “ the hand of God was with the Barbets.” This name barbet, signifying *a dog*, and usually applied to the Vaudois,

brings to mind another anecdote of a Roman Catholic who was heard to say, "Altre volte li lupi mangiavano gli Barbetti, ma tempo e venuto che li Barbetti mangiano i lupi,"¹ a speech which cost the luckless punster his life, since it was made in a moment of great irritation, when the army returned disappointed after a vain attempt to surprise the Vaudois in their mountain entrenchments.

Shortly after this a truce was concluded, and after a while a treaty ; and the sword was for a brief space replaced in its scabbard. But amid so much aggression and crime, was Protestant Europe a cold and inactive looker-on ? And what has been the success of the eloquent Léger, who left the valleys to plead his people's cause in France and Switzerland ?

A cry of horror and indignation echoed through every Protestant state at the news of the massacres in the valleys. The moderator, Léger, had found no difficulty in engaging the sympathy of the evangelical cantons of Switzerland, who speedily conveyed the information to Cromwell. The stern dictator of England, softened by the harrowing details, displayed the most generous ardour in the cause of the slaughtered church. He ordered a general fast, headed a subscription for the survivors with the donation of two thousand pounds from his private purse, wrote letters of strong remonstrance to the Duke of Savoy (dated May 25, 1655) and to the tyrant Louis XIV., despatching his ambassador, Sir S. Morland, to the court of the former to make a personal appeal in their favour. Well did the young and ardent delegate perform his mission. At Lyons he met Léger, and was informed by him of all the particulars. The address, delivered in Latin by Morland to the youthful

¹ "In former times the wolves ate the dogs ; now the dogs eat the wolves."

duke, at an audience granted June 23rd, in the presence of his bigoted mother, shows the impression made on his mind by the statements of the Vaudois pastor.

After an opening and courteous address to the young prince, he proceeds to inform him that his master (we quote from Morland's own translation of his speech) "hath been informed, which no man can say was done by the will of your highness, that part of those most miserable people have been cruelly massacred by your forces; part driven by violence, and forced to leave their native habitations; and so, without house or shelter, poor and destitute of all relief, do wander up and down with their wives and children, in craggy and uninhabited places, and mountains covered with snow. Now what, or what manner of cruelty have not those soldiers of late dared to act, or hath been omitted by them? Oh! the fired houses, which are yet smoking—the torn limbs, and ground defiled with blood—some men a hundred years old, decrepit with age and bedridden, have been burnt in their beds—some infants have been dashed against the rocks—others their throats cut, whose brains have, with more than cyclopean cruelty, been boiled and eaten by the murderers! What need I mention more? . . . If all the tyrants of all ages were alive again (which I would have spoken without any offence to your highness, seeing we believe none of these things were done through any default of yours), certainly they would be ashamed when they should find they had contrived nothing (in comparison of these things) that might be reported barbarous and inhuman. In the meantime the angels are surprised with horror! Men are amazed! Heaven itself seems to be astonished with the cries of dying men, and the very earth to blush, being discoloured with the gore blood of so many innocent persons! Do not Thou, Most High God,

do not Thou take that revenge which is due to so great wickedness and horrible villanies ! Let Thy blood, O Christ, wash away this blood ! ”

He then delivered a letter in Latin (which was composed by Milton) from Oliver Cromwell to the duke, interceding for the Vaudois. The queen-mother, in her reply, expressed surprise “that the malice of men should ever proceed so far as to clothe *such father-like and tender chastisements* of their most rebellious subjects with so black and ugly a character.”

The Jesuits would also have fain persuaded Morland that these reports were false ; and the French ambassador urged him to appease the Protector “by a sweet and moderate relation of all these proceedings.” But Morland was not a man to be either duped or influenced ; and the duke added—perfidiously, as it proved—that “for his highness’s (Cromwell’s) sake they would not only freely pardon these rebellious subjects for those so heinous crimes which they had committed, but also would accord to them such privileges and graces as could not but give the Lord Protector a sufficient evidence how great a respect they bore both to his person and mediation.”

Neither did the other Protestant nations, any more than Great Britain, confine their services to remonstrances or expressions of sympathy ; liberal aid in money was also afforded. The Swiss Protestant cantons were most zealous ; Holland followed. The King of Sweden, the Elector Palatine, the Elector of Brandenburg, the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, all came forward both to aid the sufferers and to remonstrate with their oppressors.

Yet it is certain that notwithstanding these fair promises, the barbarities inflicted on the Waldenses were continued without mitigation up to the middle of July, while Morland was still at Turin. The documents printed by the ambassador leave no doubt upon this subject. But, strange to say,

he does not expressly point out the infamy of the Duke of Savoy; and later writers, who for the most part have not examined his text critically, have overlooked the fact that this Catholic prince, while assuring the reigning sovereigns of Europe that he would pardon his so-called "rebellious subjects," was at the very same time permitting, if not expressly authorizing, the perpetration of the most atrocious crimes against them.

The terms of peace, when at length concluded, were sadly disadvantageous to the poor Vaudois. A number of adverse circumstances seem to have combined to defeat the best arrangements of Cromwell; for whilst Morland was engaged at Geneva in concerting the conditions of agreement with Downing, the accredited ambassador to the court, and the commissioner of the Dutch provinces, M. Van Ommeren, the Swiss, fearing that delay might prove fatal, precipitated the treaty, and procured its completion before the arrival of the English and Dutch commissioners.

The Vaudois commandant, Descombies, urged the breaking off this disadvantageous treaty, confiding in the valour of his soldiers, whom he said "he considered to be men, but had found to be lions."

But this peace, however short-lived and badly concerted, was greatly needed by the distracted country; moreover, friends pined for the release of their imprisoned relatives—parents for their kidnapped little ones, and all needed a home to shelter them on the approach of winter.

Thus was this unpropitious treaty brought about by the machinations of the Roman Catholics; and the Protestants were duped by the French ambassador, who, whilst he was entertaining Léger and his colleagues at his table, was promoting the ends of their enemies, the Propaganda.

Cromwell, highly indignant at the deception, wrote a high-

spirited letter of remonstrance to Louis XIV. in 1658; but the Protector's death in the same year deprived the Vaudois of one of their most powerful friends. Charles II. made a feeble remonstrance on their behalf to Louis XIV.; but when we remember his seizing on the funds collected for these poor people in England during the time of Cromwell, saying, "he was not bound to pay the debts of the usurper," we can believe he did not urge their suit with much zeal.

As it had ever been the policy of the Propaganda to expel from the valleys, or otherwise to persecute their most influential advisers, it is not surprising to find that Léger, the moderator, the historian, the patriot, and untiring advocate of his people, was singled out for banishment. Obligated, under a frivolous charge, to leave his beloved country, he finished his distinguished career in exile.

A few particulars of the life of this celebrated man may relieve the gloomy recital of suffering and wrong, and allow the reader a little respite ere his sympathies are again enlisted in the further and aggravated sufferings of the men of the valleys. Well might Bernard of Fontcauld call them Valdenses, and add, "they received this name, an omen of their future lot, because they are involved in deep thick shades."

Jean Léger was born in Villa-secca, in the valley of San Martino, and—as if in keeping with his after life—he entered the world amid a tremendous hurricane. His father was of noble birth, and was consul under Victor Amadeus; but his title-deeds having been consumed in a fire at the Vatican, he states that nothing remained of his nobility but a few ancestral acres. His mother's descent was still more distinguished. Her maternal grandfather, who is said to have lived to the age of a hundred and fifteen, was a relative

of the martyr Pascale. "I could prove," remarks the historian, "an unbroken sacerdotal line for four hundred years, as the ark of the covenant has always remained in my house." In 1620 the family went to Geneva. Whilst pursuing his studies there, Léger was the means of preserv-



JEAN LÉGER.

ing the life of a young prince palatine, who, whilst bathing in the lake, got entangled in some weed which grew beneath the surface. It appears that all hope of his being saved was abandoned, as no boat could approach the place on account of the matted reeds, and no one but the young Léger was found to risk his life on so hazardous a chance. At one time

both the youths had sunk beneath the water, when a strenuous effort enabled them to reach a bank of sand, on which they found a firm footing. The gratitude of the young prince grew into a romantic attachment to his preserver, and he urged him to accompany him on his travels. No proposition could have been more alluring to the enterprising Vaudois; but his tutor and uncle, seeing in him talents and qualities which would fit him for a nobler vocation, renounced for him the bright worldly advantages which had thus dawned so unexpectedly on him, and laid him on the altar of their country. Nor does it seem that Léger himself was an unwilling sacrifice, or that he reluctantly obeyed the mandate which called him away from the bright city of the lake and his friendly companion. In July, 1639, he quitted Geneva for the valleys, and relates some perils which befell him on the way. At Turin he found the city under siege by an army of Piedmontese and Spaniards, under the command of the uncles of the young king, who contested his guardianship with his mother the Duchess Christina. Here the young traveller takes a guide to conduct him across the country; but coming to a part of it just between the encampment of the two armies, the man escapes with Léger's horse, and attempts to ford a river, when the young mountaineer adroitly leaps up behind until he finds himself safe in a deserted farm, where he says, "I did not get such good cheer as my horse, who found plenty of hay and straw."

The next morning, finding that he could not escape a party of the enemy, he rode up to them boldly, accosting them in the Piedmontese *patois*. When they questioned him narrowly, I fear our good Vaudois was obliged to use some little prevarication in his answer, and to give them to believe he came from Constantinople; in proof of which he displayed for

sale, as a blind, some Oriental rarities which his uncle had absolutely brought from thence. The soldiers, or more probably officers, having made their purchases, allowed the pretended pedlar to go on his way, little thinking they had liberated the man who was not only to make the ears of all Europe tingle with the tale of their atrocities, but to hand down to posterity the history of his people's wrongs and their enemies' shame. He went his way, guided and guarded for his great destiny.

We next hear of him as the pastor of Rodoret, the coldest, bleakest commune of the valleys, where he says he was ordered to preach four sermons in a week. Here he did not remain alone, but found a fair Vaudoise willing to share his mountain manse. Going one day to preach one of his four sermons, Léger met with a tornado, and speaks with his usual *nonchalance* of his miserable plight as he rolled in the snow with his "nightcap of ice," and his broken tooth, and of "the showers of melted ice and snow into which he dissolved when brought to the fire;" indeed, the alchemy of the good man turned everything the bright side uppermost.

On the banishment of his uncle, who was too eminently useful not to incur suspicion, Léger succeeded to his parish of San Giovanni and to his perilous celebrity. One day, as he was preaching on the plague of the Egyptian frogs, with reference to his friends the monks, some of these gentlemen entered the church, amongst them a gigantic friar of the name of Father Angelo. "I took care," said the historian, "to describe the *rappports* between the monks and the frogs, not forgetting the cape and croak." On this the Goliath challenges the pastor to a controversial meeting at Luserna, where the latter narrowly escapes assassination.

In 1655, finding dangers increase, he established his family

in a place of security, and after numerous escapes and hardships, amongst others lying for two days concealed in a rude barn on the Vacherie, where, in his quaint manner, he says he "suffered more from cold than hunger, although he had only ice to eat," he made his escape, to carry into Switzerland the history of his country's wrongs, and to stir up Protestant Europe in her cause. From Paris he was prevented from proceeding to England, but he wrote to Oliver Cromwell, who offered him a refuge for his people in Ireland.

At Lyons, Léger met Morland; and his subsequent history for some time has been already traced in that of his unfortunate country.

After the treaty of Pinerolo, attempts were made to gain over this faithful pastor to the interests of Savoy; but on finding him immovable, his enemies arraigned him for treason and other equally false charges, and finally banished him from the valleys, recording in the most savage terms a sentence of death and confiscation against him.¹

After once more pleading the cause of his country in the Protestant states, and escaping the hired assassins who tracked his steps, he retired to Leyden, where he was most kindly welcomed, and where he found in the devoted tenderness of his second wife, whom he married in that city, and the esteem and gratitude of his countrymen, a balm for his past sufferings, and a rest for his wearied mind, until in 1670 he entered the rest prepared for him and for all the people of God.

¹ He was to be strangled; then his body was to be hanged by one foot on a gibbet for four-and-twenty hours; and lastly, his head was to be cut off and publicly exposed. His name was to be inserted in the list of noted outlaws; his houses were to be burned," etc. Monastier's *History of the Vaudois Church*, trans., p. 298.

One little anecdote, so characteristic of the good man's cheerful spirit amid all his trials, we must insert. The better to escape detection, he had worn, amongst other disguises, a wig. Meeting at an inn a man whom he suspected of being in search of him, and relying on his incognito, he entered into conversation, and found that his suspicions were just. "The man you seek," said he to the bravo, who had been describing Léger's appearance to himself, "is not far off; what will you give me if I will show him to you?" then, taking off his wig, and trusting to the fleetness of his horse, he bade the baffled murderer "good morning," and rode off.

There is something irresistibly winning in this gentle playfulness, which yet smiles in the valleys of the Vaudois, and characterizes some of the most distinguished of its inhabitants—the *Légers* of the present day. If the fine simile of the prophet is, as indeed we know it to be, true, that the wicked are like the troubled sea, these cheerful Christians may be compared to a still, calm lake, permanently coloured by the bright sky above, but reflecting every passing cloud, and dimpled by every water-fowl that dips its wing in the crystalline waves.





CHAPTER XI.

The Exiled Church.

FURTHER PERSECUTION OF THE VAUDOIS, AND EXPULSION
FROM THEIR VALLEYS.



THE treaty of Pinerolo has been compared to the roll of the prophet, sweet to the taste, but bitter in the swallowing; indeed, the whole history of the Vaudois Church is "written within and without with lamentation and woe." If, in tracing its long train of sufferings, we feel inclined to ask, "Wherefore were they thus eminent in trial?" the question never seems, even in their times of greatest endurance, to have disturbed their faith. Doubtless they knew—

"That 'tis not in this world below
God's chosen sons are blest;
Of the earth, earthy, they shall know
Their share of earth's unrest."

And amid their lowest estate they felt a conscious dignity

in being called upon as witnesses of God's truth before men and angels.

After the delusive peace, concluded by a treaty so disadvantageous to the inhabitants of the valleys, they were left in a more defenceless state than before, a prey to the machinations of the Propaganda. The eye of the basilisk glared on them night and day, in public and private, and seemed as if it would never be removed until it completed their annihilation.

The miserable years which intervened between this so-called peace and the exile of the Vaudois were marked by incessant vexations—by perfidy and imposition, on the one hand ; by submission to authority, and yet manly resistance to tyranny, on the other.

Janavel, recovered from his wounds, had collected round him a band of intrepid mountaineers, who defended themselves in the fastnesses of their rocks, oftentimes encountering and vanquishing those who were sent against them. The great object of the Roman Catholics appeared to be, like the wolf in the fable, to find some pretext for seizing on their victims, but, failing in this, to devour them without a pretext. But neither in history nor fable do we meet with an instance of more flagrant oppression than that which hastened the final ruin of these harmless people.

Louis XIV., the magnificent sovereign and brilliant warrior of the seventeenth century, alarmed, on the approach of death, at the review of the sins of his past life, was persuaded by his confessor, the Père la Chaise, that the most acceptable atonement would be, not that already made for the sins of the whole world, but the death and suffering of a large portion of his most meritorious subjects.

The history of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes comes not within our province, except to state that, not content with the mass of suffering he had occasioned by his gigantic wrong to his own subjects, the hoary tyrant turns to the young Duke of Savoy, and demands of him to abolish the Church of the Valleys, and to force the Vaudois into apostasy or exile. Victor Amadeus II. hesitated. He had lately, and publicly, acknowledged their services and loyalty, and he recoiled from such severity towards them. The ambassador of Louis, prepared perhaps for this objection, coolly replied, "that his master had in readiness fourteen thousand troops for the invasion of the valleys; but if he thus took possession of them, it would be to annex them to his own dominions." The duke yielded, and basely lent himself to the destruction of his own subjects.

A few days after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, on the 4th of November, 1686, a proclamation was made forbidding any stranger to remain in the valleys more than three days; and on the 31st of the following January another was issued, ordering the demolition of the Protestant temples, the banishment of the ministers and schoolmasters, and the forced baptism of all children according to the ritual of Rome. It was in vain the aggrieved people appealed to their sovereign, reminding him of his solemn treaties; his ear was closed by the priests, and all access debarred. The foreign powers who again endeavoured to procure redress were informed that the duke was not at liberty to retract the engagement entered into with France.

The Vaudois had now no alternative but to renounce their religion and country, or to take up arms in their

defence. They chose the latter, and their former wonderful success at first attended their resistance. They numbered but two thousand five hundred men against the combined armies of France and Savoy, the former commanded by the renowned General Catinat, the latter by Victor Amadeus; but the recollection of former triumphs nerved their hearts, and the cry of "Death rather than the mass!" echoed from mountain to mountain.

For three days these conquerors in upwards of thirty assaults resisted the flood that bore down on them from all sides—and then laid down their arms without any apparent reason! This part of the history is involved in profound obscurity; the two great guides were silenced by banishment and death; and in those agitated times no one of equal authority took up the pen until it was resumed by Arnaud a few years later. In the preface to the *Glorieuse Rentrée*, he mentions with grief and regret, that after having repulsed both the French and Piedmontese army with great slaughter, his countrymen should have been deceived by the false promises of the Prince Gabrael, uncle of the duke, to lay down their arms.

To those commentators on the Revelation (and they are not a few) who suppose "the witnesses" symbolic of the Vaudois Church, her extraordinary slaughter, exile, and, for the mystic three days, her utter prostration, are clearly accounted for, and the mystery of this sudden submission developed: therefore on this head we should not feel surprised, although we may deplore the tragic sequel.

No sooner had the poor Vaudois laid down their arms, on the promise of a restoration to their liberty of conscience, signed by the Duke, than the whole country was delivered up as a prey to all the enormities which had desolated and

desecrated it in 1655. Need we repeat the detail? After the sack and pillage of the beautiful valleys, the remaining population were loaded with chains, and Piedmont became one vast overcrowded jail! Besides the five hundred sufferers who were sent *as a present* to the King of France for his galleys, *fourteen thousand* wretched beings, men, women, and children, were thrown into the most loathsome dungeons, fed on bread of the worst quality, and water from fetid ditches; forced to lie on the bare earth—the dead, the dying, all left to rot together. But the fact that when the gates of these foul receptacles were opened, of the fourteen thousand healthy mountaineers on whom they first closed, only *four thousand* skeletons crawled forth into the light of day—will best tell the harrowing tale.

Many executions took place,—that of the minister Leidet of Prali is one of the most affecting. He was taken whilst engaged in his devotions beneath the shelter of a rock. The good man was singing some of the hymns of his Church. What a picture is this of serenity and trust in such a time of devastation and peril! And his fortitude quailed not during months of confinement, fed on bread and water, one foot fastened to heavy stocks which prevented his lying down, and exposed to the worse torment of the perpetual disputes, threats, and cajoleries of the monks, which they continued to his last hour, though he begged “to be left alone with his God.” Well indeed did he say, when led out from his dungeon, that he had to rejoice that day in a twofold deliverance—emancipation of body and soul. He went to execution with a holy exultation, and closed a long and affecting prayer with his Lord and Saviour’s last words, which were the last he, too, spake,—“Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.”

What were the feelings of Victor Amadeus, as from his palace at Luserna he looked over the beautiful region which he had turned into the abomination of desolation? Is it possible that bigotry, however blind, could have stifled all feeling of remorse? We know not what were the stings of conscience or the compunctions of natural regret. This we do know, that they wore not the gentler form of repentance, since, when at the united voice of Protestant Europe he consented to draw aside the bolts of his dungeons, his sentence of extorted clemency was executed with barbarous reluctance; and it was not until the winter had set in that the alternative of exile was conceded to the miserable remnant of the brave, the virtuous, the loyal people who had been so unjustly immured within them. In this rigorous season behold a band of half-clothed, half-starved skeletons, amongst whom were the sick, the aged, and the suckling, turned out to cross the Alps in weather in which no man endued with human feeling—

“Would turn his enemy's dog to doors.”

As the prince and his council must have anticipated, hundreds perished by the way-side. One hundred and fifty dropped the first night; and when at the foot of Mont Cenis, the experienced mountaineers, foreseeing a coming storm, entreated, for the sake of the feeble and diseased, that their march might be retarded, the officer who conducted the party refused. Eighty-six perished in the snowstorms they encountered on passing the mountain. There were some of their conductors who were more humane, and showed great compassion in the execution of their cruel task.

But the duke's conduct was uniformly unfeeling; he had promised that decent clothing should be supplied, but only

a small number of jackets and stockings were distributed, and the food was of the worst quality, and dealt out most sparingly.

But let us turn to the more sunny side of human nature—or rather of Christian benevolence. Let us turn from the priests and princes who drove the remnant of a holy, harmless people into exile, with far less care than the beasts of the field receive from their conductors, to behold them welcomed with the most caressing hospitality by their Christian brethren on the other side of the Alps. Free and generous Switzerland! if ever—which God forbend!—your liberty of conscience or action is assailed, may your deeds of mercy towards the perishing Vaudois be remembered, to stir up all who have Christian hearts and able hands to repay the vast debt of gratitude—the full, overflowing cup of the waters of refreshment poured out for these fainting disciples of the Lord.

As the exiled bands, one after the other, crawled into the bright city of the lake of lakes, they found Christian brethren on the watch to receive and convey them to their homes; nay, even contending who should have the care of the most feeble and diseased, whom they bore on their shoulders to the couch and table spread for them beneath their hospitable roofs. Here private benevolence fed, clothed, and nursed them, until more organized measures were arranged by the united evangelical cantons for their future settlement. But their benefactors did not defer their ministrations until the arrival of the sufferers. On learning from the first party their hardships by the way, the magistrates of Berne despatched deputies, who, with the permission of the Piedmontese government, took their station along the road the exiles were to travel, and provided them at every stage with

clothes, food, medicines, and the reviving cordial of sympathy and consolation. When the last band of exiles had passed, these untiring friends proceeded to Turin, to solicit the liberation of the remaining prisoners, amongst whom were nine pastors, and the return of the children who had been taken away during the preceding disturbances. But the Propaganda were not to be foiled of their prey. The children, especially, who had been placed in convents, in order to be brought up in the Romish faith, and the pastors, were most eminently the objects of their hatred. All the delegates obtained was an interview with these in the presence of witnesses. The next morning three pastors and their families, with a *malefactor*, were sent to the castle at Nice. The day after, three more, a malefactor still accompanying them, were despatched another way ; and the Swiss commissioners who watched for the third party had only an opportunity of exchanging a few words, and supplying them with money, as the melancholy *cortège* passed, headed by the bandit in chains, whilst the waggons with the children and the sick were followed by the pastors and their wives on foot. Thus the intervention of the Swiss delegates seems only to have tightened their bonds.

But whilst these excellent men were labouring for the benefit of the sufferers by the way, their governments at home spared neither labour nor expense to provide for them on their arrival. Already had the evangelical cantons received to their hearts and hearths thousands of French Protestants, whom the revocation of the Edict of Nantes had rendered beggars and exiles ; but this did not close either against the yet severer necessities of their Vaudois brethren. We are told that five thousand ells of linen, and an equal quantity of the warm woollen stuffs of the Oberland, were

made into garments at Berne alone, for the expected exiles. How well can we imagine the zeal of the fair Swiss sempstresses—the kindest and most adroit in the world—when engaged in this Dorcas labour. But this was not the only preparation; the more solemn one of a day set apart for general humiliation, fasting, and prayer, was followed by a collection; thus this noble act of national charity was sanctified by one of religious solemnity. Thus two thousand six hundred wretched beings were clothed, fed, housed, and many of them tenderly nursed, in a community whose means for the most part, were but sufficient for their own moderate wants.

But it must not be supposed that the other Protestant states left the burden entirely on Switzerland. The Elector of Brandenburg, and several German princes, opened their gates to them, whilst Holland entertained the project of transplanting them into their settlements at the Cape of Good Hope. If Great Britain did not come forward, as she had before done, promptly and prominently, it was because she was herself groaning under the incubus of Popery during the reign of the second James; and France, as we have seen, had need of the aid which her Protestant population would otherwise so freely have bestowed. A century later, and anarchy and infidelity, the children of tyranny and superstition, revenged the wrongs which the priests of Rome had inflicted on their Protestant brethren. “It is a truth that ought not to be concealed,” says Dr. M’Crie, “and which has not yet been sufficiently acknowledged—a truth which, on account of the important admonitions which it conveys to the present and succeeding generations, deserves not merely to be recorded with pen and ink, but to be graven with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond on a monument

more durable than brass—that the wretched and wicked policy pursued with respect to the Protestants, from the days of Louis XIV., was one of the principal causes of the French revolution, and especially the horrid excesses and impieties with which it was attended.” Should we not also borrow the diamond pen further to record that, when the scared priests of that persecuting Church felt the rod of chastisement, and after the murder of twenty-four thousand of their brethren, “they obtained their chief asylums in the same countries whither they had driven the scattered Churches of the Reformed for refuge, the Protestants returned good for evil to those persecutors who, imbued with the spirit of their fathers, were obliged to seek shelter in the hated bosom of heretics?”¹

But we return to our exiles. It was doubtless mortifying to their kind friends and benefactors to witness the indifference with which these poor people listened to the various benevolent plans, and eligible places of settlement offered to their selection; this indecision would look like ingratitude towards those who had so generously received, and would now so kindly provide for them. It is true that the exiles were industrious in gaining their own livelihood, and of such irreproachable morality, that one act of dishonesty, the purloining a musket, which was speedily restored, was the only misdemeanour of which they were chargeable during their whole residence in Switzerland. But there lay at their hearts a weight which no kindness could remove—that mysterious disease, that home sickness, which first attacking the spirits, at last makes ravages on the mental and bodily health of the sufferer. Thus the poor men of the valleys, even whilst breathing the free air of the Swiss mountains,

¹ Fisk's *Divine History of the Church*, p. 290.

were consumed with an earnest longing for their chestnut shades, their vineyards, and their homes. Some, too, had children who had been carried off by the Papists; many had friends yet pining in captivity; and all mourned for the pastors from whom they had been so cruelly separated.

In the month of July, 1687, impelled by these strong incitements, a party of four hundred of the exiles, without plan, preparation, or leader, assembled at Ouchy, near Lausanne, with the apparently hopeless design of crossing the lake, and making their way over the mountains into the valleys, in spite of the combined armies of France and Savoy, which guarded all their passes. The authorities of Berne, having had timely intimation of their purpose, and feeling the escape of the Vaudois would draw them into a war with the Duke of Savoy, interfered to prevent their departure, and obliged them to return to their several cantonments.

But the execution of this scheme, so wild, so apparently impracticable, became the irrevocable determination of two of those distinguished and gifted human instruments which, throughout the entire history of our world, we see raised up in times of emergency to work out the intentions of its Almighty Ruler. The reader is already acquainted with one of them—Janavel, the hero of Rorà. Thirty-five years after the exile of this brave man he comes to join his brethren, banished like himself, at Geneva; and though he is no longer able to offer them the aid of his once powerful arm, time, which has palsied his giant strength and silvered his head, has added wisdom to his counsels, and experience to his authority. He found amongst the exiles a man in every way qualified to put into action the plans which his military experience suggested, and who united in carrying out an enterprise which

their daring valour deemed practicable, and which their exalted piety represented as a duty,—namely, the rescue of the ark of the covenant from the hands of the heathen.

The name of Henri Arnaud, the coadjutor of Janavel, awakens a crowd of holy and beautiful associations. We felt such rush over us as we looked on his portrait which hangs in the cheerful *salon* of one of his descendants, the last now bearing his honoured name. How would the Christian hero have rejoiced, if during his long struggle or longer exile, a vision of this pleasant dwelling had been presented to his mind's eye—this home of his ancestors, occupying, as it now does, the site of that fort which carried ruin and desolation into the vale beneath,—to behold the vine hanging its rich clusters where cannon were planted, and to hear the cheerful voices of the children of his house echoing amid the ruins of those enclosures, where the oath of blasphemy and the threat of vengeance formerly resounded! We did indeed bless the memory of the Christian conqueror, when, on one beauteous evening of a just departed summer, we called at this pleasant abode, and the labourers were busy in filling its granaries with the golden harvest of its fields.

As we stood admiring the garlanded preparations for a rustic feast in honour of the bounteous ingathering and the birthday of M. Arnaud's daughter (whose chair of honour was overarched with evergreens and flowers), we could but recall to mind how few of the latter mingled with the deathless wreath that encircled the brow of her intrepid forefather. His pilgrimage truly, from first to last, lay over rough and thorny ground, and he found no rest but in exile.

Henri Arnaud was born in the neighbourhood of Die, in Dauphiny, in 1641, and consequently had reached his forty-

sixth year at the period of his introduction to our readers. His portrait, which we have already described as hanging in the dwelling of his descendant, was taken at the age of forty. The features are massive, the forehead high and intellectual, and the hair parted on it flows down at each side of the head, and hangs in large curls on the shoulders. His frame was robust, his mind strong, clear, and decisive. He was gifted both with prudence and energy—with indomitable courage and unwearying patience; with an eloquence the most persuasive, and a power of command the most irresistible. In short, his historians and his deeds combine to present him to us as uniting physically and mentally all those qualities which attract the love as well as command the obedience of those with whom their possessors are associated.

Henri Arnaud was educated for the ministry, but the troubles of the times caused him to change his views, and he entered the service of the Prince of Orange, afterwards William III. of England. He evinced a decided aptitude for military tactics, rose to the rank of captain, and received marks of royal favour; yet it appears he resumed his original intention of consecration to the ministry, by taking orders in the Vaudois Church previously to the eventful year of 1686. Thus it was that he became so eminently qualified for the united position of leader and minister which was afterwards assigned to him, and thus he secured the favour of that powerful friend, who aided so materially in the great enterprise he was destined to accomplish. Although Arnaud occupied the important post of pastor of La Torre at the time of the invasion of the united forces in 1686, and was present at the gallant defence of San Germano, his voice was raised in vain against the subsequent submission of the valleys; after which, perceiving further remonstrance useless,

he waited not for the fatal surrender, which threw nearly all his brethren into the hands of their perfidious foe, but reserved his valuable services for an eventful future. He fled, and subsequently joined the exiled Vaudois at Geneva. Another and we believe the only other pastor¹ who had escaped joined in the council of the heroes and elders, who set about their romantic enterprise with caution and forethought.

Their first care was to despatch three trustworthy agents to make a survey of the mountain paths, and to engage their friends on the way to lay in a provision of that kind of bread of which the inhabitants of the Alps make a sufficient quantity at one time for their yearly wants, and which is as hard and durable as ship biscuit. They also provided, as far as their limited resources allowed, arms and ammunition, clothes and stores, for their perilous undertaking.

But whilst the Vaudois were thus secretly preparing to return to their own home, their benefactors were busily engaged in providing them one elsewhere ; and already in the summer of 1688, the Chancellor de Bondelly arrived with a commission from the new elector, Frederick III. of Brandenburg, to conduct into his territories the thousand Vaudois emigrants whom his father, the great elector, had engaged to furnish with permanent settlements. The messengers of the Vaudois had also returned from their reconnoitring expedition, after having been arrested, and exposed to much danger and hardship ; but their report must on the whole have been satisfactory to the council, as we find them fixing on the 9th of the following June for a gathering of their forces, the place of meeting being fixed for the picturesque town of Bex, so well known to modern tourists.

Notwithstanding their utmost caution, the gathering

¹ M. Montoux.

together of six or seven hundred men could not be accomplished in entire secrecy, and the governor of Aigle was furnished at their arrival with authority from his government to arrest their progress. This he did in the kindest and most judicious manner. Assembling the poor *détenus* in the temple at Bex, he addressed to them the most conciliatory exhortations, which were further enforced by a sermon from their own leader, Henri Arnaud, from the consolatory text, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The excellent Thormann did not confine his benevolence to words, he conducted them to Aigle, lodged them in his own and other private houses, and at their departure lent them two hundred crowns to assist the most distant in their return to their quarters.

After this unsuccessful attempt, more than eight hundred of the exiled Vaudois at length made up their mind to accept the generous offers of the German princes, and embarked on the Rhine, to be conveyed to the Electorate of Brandenburg.

Arnaud assisted at the embarkation with a heavy heart—impressed with an unalterable conviction that it was the will of God that the Church of the Wilderness should be again set up, and that her witnesses, whose bodies had now lain their appointed time unburied, should again stand on their feet through the agency of the Spirit. With these exalted ideas of their mission, entertained by many commentators, both ancient and modern, it was natural that he should desire that all his countrymen should share in the glory of the enterprise. This was in a great measure the case; for though received with the most generous and considerate kindness by the German princes, the invasion of the Palatinate by the French in the succeeding year caused

the return of almost all the Vaudois emigrants to their old quarters in Switzerland.

In the meantime, Henri Arnaud hastened to crave advice and assistance from William, Prince of Orange, who received him with great kindness, and whose subsequent elevation to the throne of England rendered his aid yet more effective.

The supplies also which poured in from the Protestant countries enabled the Vaudois to purchase arms for their contemplated enterprise, as well as to lay up a little money in aid of its execution.

From Neuchâtel, where Arnaud resided with his family, he made every necessary preparation for their departure, secretly, for fear of compromising their benefactors with Savoy; whilst the Swiss, in addition to their fears of being involved in a war with that power, believed they were doing the Vaudois the greatest service in hindering them from an undertaking which seemed as hopeless as it was hazardous. But as the moment of separation arrived, the high aspirations of the Christian warriors were saddened by the melancholy farewells that awaited them with those wives and children, their aged and sick, who must of necessity be left behind in Switzerland.

The day fixed on for departure was one set apart by the Lutheran Church for prayer and humiliation, and chosen as such from the facilities it afforded of escape, the people being assembled in the churches.

But through the deserted streets, over the solitary mountain paths, men, singly and in parties, passed with thoughtful countenances, yet vigorous step, whose eager eyes, even though dimmed by tears, seemed in their distant gaze to be looking for some land, far, far away from the ground over which they trod.



CHAPTER XII.

The Returning Church.

THE GLORIOUS RETURN OF THE VAUDOIS INTO THEIR
COUNTRY.



ON the 16th of August, 1689, the forest of Prangins, near Nyon, situated on the borders of the Lake of Geneva, presented a singularly interesting scene. It was the place of meeting assigned for the exiled and returning Vaudois; and here, during the whole of that memorable day, was found an anxious and silent host, augmented from hour to hour by arrivals from different quarters; not, however, in sufficient numbers to quiet the apprehension of those who knew how to compute the expected complement. But the sun stayed not on his course, although some of the most efficient had not arrived. The stars one by one glanced through the wood; and

every breath that stirred its boughs, or agitated the waves of the lake, raised a fear lest the forces of the country were on their way to stop the embarkation of those so sorely impatient to depart.

At length, as the clocks of Nyon struck nine, Arnaud waved the signal for departure, and he and his followers silently approached the shore; but, ere stepping into the boats which there awaited them, whilst all knelt on the margin of the lake, their pastor-chieftain implored, in a loud voice, a blessing on their projected enterprise, the most extraordinary perhaps that patriotism ever conceived, or valour achieved.

They crossed the lake in fifteen boats, and landed in safety between Yvoire and Nernier, just at the commencement of “le petit lac,” where the breadth of water does not exceed a league. The boats then returned to fetch the later arrivals; but three only effected a landing, and brought over a fresh detachment; and this accident caused the detention of two hundred men on the other side. Amongst these was the elected chief of the enterprise, Captain Bourgeois of Neuchâtel, whose after history was most disastrous. Neither was this the only cloud which hung over the dawn of this undertaking. A band of their bravest and best, coming from the Grisons, St. Gall, and Wurtemberg, were arrested in the Popish cantons, and delivered up to the resident of Savoy, who sent them to the prisons of Turin.

The whole assembled number amounted scarcely to nine hundred. These Arnaud arranged in twenty companies, of whom thirteen were of the valleys of Piedmont, six from the French Vaudois valleys, and one composed of volunteers. Two ministers, besides their chief, accompanied the expedition—M. Montoux, already named, from Pragela, and

M. Cyrus Chyon, pastor from Dauphiny. This last, however, was soon separated from the party. Venturing too boldly into a village in search of a guide, he was arrested and led prisoner to Chambéry. Again, as at their embarkation, the little army knelt and lifted up their hearts to God, on the enemies' side of the lake; and never did enterprise more require aid from on high. This they were well assured of. The expedition with all its difficulties was open before them. They knew that they had to cross a hostile country, bristling with the bayonets of France and Savoy; and who could better estimate the snowy wastes, the precipitous rocks, the foaming torrents they had to cross, than those whose habitation had been in the valleys of the Alps? Who could better calculate the amount of privation they had to encounter, than those who were aware of the scanty resources of the country they had to cross? And even were all these difficulties surmounted, what had they to look to on their arrival? The attempt would have been folly—heroic folly perhaps—had it not been undertaken from a firm conviction that they were following the direct leadings of Providence, and accomplishing the high destiny of their witnessing Church.

In the history of *La Glorieuse Rentrée* (which, if not all written by Arnaud, was partly his composition, and the whole was certainly published by his authority) a copious journal is kept of their daily route. To this, and to other equally elaborate accounts, we must refer our readers, contenting them, we hope, for the present, with a rapid passage over the most prominent parts of the adventurous course, and a short halt at its more important stages.

Their first day's journey was extended until midnight, when, notwithstanding a pouring rain, and their previous

fatigue, the weary travellers slept on the ground with no canopy but the weeping sky. At Yvoire, of which they took possession without firing a shot, they seized some of the principal inhabitants, whom they took with them as hostages, a precautionary measure which considerably aided their progress, together with the requiring these gentlemen to put their signature to a letter, attesting the peaceable disposition of the emigrants, and their engagement to honestly pay for any provisions they required. These hostages were renewed at different stages of their journey—sometimes a Capuchin friar was compelled to accompany them, at others an influential landowner; on all occasions they were treated with considerate kindness. It was a pleasantry often repeated by the captives—who hoped, by pointing out other prisoners, to get their own liberty—when they encountered any one of consideration, to draw the attention of their captors by remarking, “There is a fine bird for our cage.”

At Sallenches began what in ordinary circumstances might be termed the impracticable portion of their route. By a gorge which opens towards the south, they entered into the bosom of the Alps. Removed from all practicable roads, climbing the sharpest precipices, often by steps cut like ladders in the rocks, only to descend others equally steep, and again to mount—

“Where wilds, immeasurably spread,
Seem lengthening as they go.”

On the second night, after a fatiguing day, in which their progress had been threatened both at Cluse and Sallenches, the same cold beds awaited them, with the additional hardships of want both of food and firing. Still they returned

thanks for being thus far led on their way, and, animated by the exhortations of their brave and devout leader, took courage. And courage and faith were needed, for the perils of the way increased. They were now to quit all beaten



COL DU BONHOMME.

paths, and to press their adventurous way over the summit of "the Haute Luce," and penetrate into the dreary sublimities of the Giant of the Alps. On the fourth day they

reached the Col du Bonhomme, the neighbouring mountain to Mont Blanc, and crossed the Plan des Dames—a dreary waste which has acquired a melancholy celebrity from the tradition that a lady of distinction and her numerous retinue once perished beneath the snow with which it is almost always covered. There is a tombstone in the cemetery of Geneva which records the equally melancholy fate of two English gentlemen on the same hazardous passage. But this spot of sad memories was one of better hope for the returning exiles, for after climbing the mountain, knee-deep in snow, in heavy rain, and the heavier depression of an anticipated obstacle on its summit, they found the fortifications which had been erected on it abandoned, and their descent into the valley of the Versoi unimpeded.

And now their devious paths led them through the valleys of the Arc and the Isère, until, on the seventh day, they met with some opposition at Sainte-Foy; but the address of their leader rescued them, and his penetration discovered the artifice hidden under a pretence of hospitality, which promoted the suspected hosts to the honour of a seat with their other “caged birds.” Here, for the first time for eight days and nights, Arnaud and Montoux enjoyed “the rapture of repose” in a bed for three hours! together with a plentiful supply of provision for the whole of his party. This seasonable refreshment, together with the comparative ease of their last two days’ march, raised their strength and spirits so greatly that they heard with pleasure rather than apprehension, that an armed host of considerable power awaited them on the other side of Mont Cenis.

But dangers and difficulties under various forms tracked their painful passage over the Great and Little Cenis. On the

atter, misled by treacherous guides, and enveloped in fog, they descended the perilous gorge of Jaillon, only to find their passage blocked by a detachment of soldiers from the garrison of Exilles, then in the possession of the French. Their return was so painful and dangerous, that many of the hostages begged to be put to death. Some of them, together with many of the Vaudois, were left behind, and the latter made prisoners. Such as fell into the hands of the Savoyards were sent to Turin; whilst those taken by the French wore out their lives in the galleys. Such was the diverse fate of two excellent surgeons who on this day were lost to their brethren.

After sounding their trumpets for two hours to collect the missing, forty in number, the diminished and sorrowing army were obliged to continue their route. It was Arnaud's intention to pass the river between Exilles and Oulx, at the bridge of Salabertrand. When within a league of that place, they demanded of a peasant whom they met whether they could procure any provisions by paying for them. "Come on," said the man; "you will find all you want—they are preparing an excellent supper for you." The shades of evening had fallen as the Vaudois chief led his troops to the banks of the Dora, and pointed to the bridge over which they had to pass, and the brilliant line of bivouac fires gleaming from the opposite banks, and extending far into the country beyond. After a prayer of more than usual solemnity, under cover of the night they advanced to the bridge, the company of two hundred from Exilles hanging on their rear, and the formidable array of French soldiery spread before them. To the question of the sentinels of the advanced post, "Who goes there?" they answered, "Friends, if allowed to pass;" to which the hoarse rejoinder, "Kill them all!

kill them all !” was followed by a volley of two thousand muskets. At the command of Arnaud, every man threw himself flat on the ground, and one alone was wounded. But the enemy pressed hard on their rear ; and in this situation of redoubled peril, some brave spirits cried out, “ Courage ! the bridge is won ! ” “ The wish was father to the thought ; ” for rushing forward sword in hand, and with fixed bayonets, the Vaudois cleared the bridge with the rapidity and force of an arrow, and threw themselves with frantic valour on all who opposed them. The foe, thunder-struck and palsied, used their muskets only to parry this furious onset, and fled in terror, the assailants following them so closely as to seize them by the hair of their head. The victory was complete. The French commander exclaimed, as they bore him wounded to Briançon, “ Is it possible that I have lost both the battle and my honour ? ” Yet thus it was ; for his two thousand five hundred disciplined troops, advantageously posted, flanked by the two hundred from the garrison of Exilles, and swelled by a numerous body of the peasantry, fled before eight hundred inexperienced mountaineers. The spoil was immense ; the enemy had disappeared ; and by the light of the moon, which now rose over the field of war, the victors were enabled to select such arms and military stores as they could carry off. They then threw a part into the river ; and collecting the remainder of the powder ere they departed, set fire to it by a train. As the loud explosion echoed through the valley, the Vaudois trumpeters sounded the notes of victory, and the rest, throwing their caps into the air, exclaimed, “ Thanks be to the Lord of hosts, who has given us the victory over our enemies ! ” Such are the fortunes of war ! At one time they were craving the common necessities of

life, at another feeding the flames with their superabundant supplies.

But victory does not always insure repose—the conquerors were still within the range of the returning foe, and must drag their overtasked limbs up the steep sides of Mount Sei. By the glare of their giant bonfire, and the softer light of the fully risen moon, they commenced the ascent. Many lay down by the wayside, overcome with fatigue and sleep. In vain the rearguard endeavoured to rouse them to a sense of their danger. “Tired Nature’s sweet restorer,” as the poet sings, was to them rather a betrayer, for, lulled in her spells, eighty of our brave Vaudois fell into the hands of the enemy—a loss which dimmed the brightness of their previous triumph.

The next day was the Sabbath. As the weary troops reached the summit of Mount Sei, the glorious sun arose, gilding the tops of the distant mountains—the well-known guardians of their native valleys gleaming, as it were, with welcome to their recovered sons. Arnaud pointed them out to his people, and invited them to join in thanksgiving for the privilege of again beholding the boundaries of home. There was no house made with hands to worship in on that Sabbath on the mountains—

“The turf alone their fragrant shrine,
Their temple, Lord, that arch of Thine:”

but never were thanksgivings rendered with more grateful fervour than theirs.

Thus far had the patriotic band pursued their way like a fair stream, asking only a peaceable passage, and unruffled except when their progress was impeded. But their circumstances are changed, they come now to lay claim to their

usurped possessions, and rush down on their valleys with the impetuosity of their mountain torrents. In the melancholy detail of acts of painful severity, let us recollect their perilous situation. Reduced now to seven hundred men, with no spare hands to guard and no prisons to contain their captives, they were often constrained—alas that we should be obliged to write it!—to show no quarter to the unhappy beings whom the chances of war threw into their power, and to seize on the provisions necessary for their sustenance.

On the twelfth day after crossing Lac Lemman, the Vaudois first set their foot again on their native soil. How changed, how desolate, those once happy homes! what crimes of crimson dye were impressed on every rood of ground—what harrowing recollections hung on every rock! But the Vaudois had one balm for every wound, one softener for every irritated passion—prayer. At Prali, the parish of the martyr Leidet, they found the church still standing; and having removed the idolatrous symbols of the Popish worship, Arnaud made a humble pulpit of a bench placed near the door; and then the seven hundred warriors, laying down their arms, filled the interior and porch of the little temple. In the presence of so many affecting objects, an eloquence less powerful than that of the soldier-priest would doubtless have been felt. We do not wonder that *his* should have penetrated the hearts of his hearers, when he preached to them from the 129th Psalm: “Many a time have they afflicted me, . . . may Israel now say.” Even this, however, must have been less overpowering than when the united voices joined in singing the touching lament so applicable to their own woes, contained in the 74th, beginning, “Why hast Thou cast us off for ever?”

A few days after, a ceremony of a yet more imposing

nature took place on the heights above Bobbio. Here, after putting to flight two hundred of the guards of Savoy at the pass of Giulian, and taking possession of the village below, the little army rested a while—and having listened attentively to the exhortations of the pastor, Moutoux, and the further deliberations of a national council, they bound themselves by an oath of union, known by the title of “The Oath of Sibaoud.”¹

The anniversary of this memorable bond, as well as of the “glorieuse rentrée,” was kept in September, 1853, on this very spot, when upwards of two thousand of the now emancipated Church in the Wilderness congregated to listen to the exhortations of their pastors and elders, to thank God for all His loving-kindnesses, to sing His praises, and to spend a day of holy joy and loving union on one of the most beautiful spots of this creation. “I wish,” wrote one of the Vaudois pastors, “I could give you any idea of the sight, altogether so novel, of above two thousand persons united beneath the chestnut trees of Sibaoud, collected without the shadow of an invitation from the pastors, from all parts of the country. The impression, never to be forgotten, of their united voices, which reached my ear before they came in sight—the astonishing perseverance with which they remained listening for two hours before noon, and two during the afternoon (standing the whole time), to the reading of the Word of God, singing, prayer, and the most serious exhortations—the manner in which some of our people spoke, recommending the regular reading of the Bible,—all this would have enchanted you, if you could have been present. And then the magical picture which this multitude presented, when at noon they divided into fifty groups of

¹ See Appendix A, p. 310.

friends or family circles, and, seeking a fountain or the border of the torrent, sat down to enjoy their frugal but joyous repast, with the appetite which the mountain air never fails to sharpen." What a sweet picture! How would the returning exiles have blessed God amid all their trials, could they have beheld their children's children thus renewing *le Serment de Sibaoud*!

The Vaudois have a beautiful anthem, called *The Oath of Sibaoud*, set to music by M. Bost, of Geneva. The words are very appropriate, but would lose by translation. We give, instead, the following exquisite lines of our own poetess, Felicia Hemans, conveying the same sentiments; and those who have visited the valleys of the Vaudois, and have become acquainted with the inhabitants, will recognise the truth of the picture:

“HYMN OF THE VAUDOIS MOUNTAINEERS.

“ For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!
Thou hast made Thy children mighty
By the touch of the mountain sod.
Thou hast fixed our ark of refuge
Where the spoiler's foot ne'er trod:
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

“ We are watchers of a beacon
Whose light must never die
We are guardians of an altar,
'Midst the silence of the sky;
The rocks yields founts of courage,
Struck forth as by Thy rod;
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

“ For the dark resounding caverns,
Where Thy still small voice is heard,
For the strong pines of the forest,
That by Thy breath are stirred,
For the storms on whose free pinions
Thy Spirit walks abroad ;
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our fathers’ God !

“ The royal eagle darteth
On his quarry from the heights,
And the stag that knows no master
Seeks there his wild delights ;
But we for Thy communion
Have sought the mountain sod ;
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our fathers’ God !

“ The banner of the chieftain
Far, far below us waves,
The war-horse of the spearman
Cannot reach our lofty caves ;
Thy dark clouds wrap the threshold
Of freedom’s last abode ;
For the strength of the hills we thank Thee,
Our God, our fathers’ God.

“ For the shadow of Thy presence
Round our camp of rock outspread,
For the stern defiles of battle
Bearing record of our dead ;
For the snows and for the torrents,
For the free hearts’ burial sod ;
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our fathers’ God ! ”

But the rest of the warrior-pilgrims at Sibaoud was not such a mountain picnic as we have described. The enemy they had to contend with was too formidable to allow them

repose, much less enjoyment ; and even the wonderful victories they gained, in which hundreds fell for the loss of units, exhausted the strength of their ranks, without making any essential difference in those of their enemy. Individual life was held of little value by the revoker of the Edict of Nantes, or Victor Amadeus of Savoy. But the wise leader of the Vaudois thought differently, and a check they received at this time induced him to change his tactics, and to make preparations for the coming winter. He drew off his men from the fertile valley of Luserna, and retired to that of San Martino. Here they cut down the corn and stored it with the other fruits of the earth brought in by their foraging parties. Still presenting a martial front to the enemy, they retired from height to height in harassing warfare, which nothing but their ardent love of country and the impression of their Heaven-directed mission could have enabled them to endure. Their French allies deserted in parties, only, alas ! to fall into the hands of armed foes ; and at length even the faith of the Vaudois began to waver.

At Champ la Salse, the disheartened band, now reduced to four hundred, held a council. That their present situation was untenable, all were agreed ; but there was a division respecting the course they should take. Some proposed the mountains of Bobbio, others desired to join some of their comrades on the heights of Angrogna. The watchful chief saw the risings of strife, and knew there was but one sure resource,—“ Let us ask counsel from above,” said he ; and when the irritation of these poor tempest-tossed pilgrims was softened by the influence of prayer, Arnaud proposed a third place of retreat. That night they all set out for the Balsille, and reached it before daybreak. It is well they did not wait for the morning’s light, as Arnaud tells us “ that

when the Vaudois saw the places they had passed over afterwards, their hair stood on end." This natural fortress is situated at the extremity of the valley of San Martino, shut in by steep mountains, and traversed by the torrent of the Germanasco. The rock is composed of three terraces, with a platform on each, and rises perpendicularly, terminating in a cone. To the natural strength of the wild fort, Arnaud's knowledge of fortification enabled him to add the artificial defences of walls, ditches, and forts; whilst he caused huts to be dug in the earth to serve as a rude kind of barrack. Ere three days had elapsed, the first battalion of the French army, who had seized on their magazines of corn, etc., arrived, and closed the Balsille in on every side. On the 29th of October, the season being already inclement in those snowy regions, the enemy advanced to attack the castle, and suffered considerable loss; and shortly after the French retired, bidding the besieged, with one of their usual witty *doubles entendres*, "have patience until Easter, when they would return."

And now, what were the employments of the garrison in the wild gorge of the Germanasco during the intervening months of winter? First, let it be stated, that morning and evening their chief, and now their only pastor called his four hundred brave comrades around him for prayer; twice on Sunday, and once during the week, he preached to them. The necessities of the body were next to be provided for—and how? Their stock of hoarded grain and fruit had fallen into the enemy's hand, and the country round them was covered with snow. But underneath that covering lay the *unreaped* fruits of the earth, which had been sown by the Popish occupants of their land, who had fled ere they could reap the produce of their toil. Here,



THE BALSILLE, OR BALSIGLIA, VAL SAN MARTINO.

then, was wholesome and abundant nourishment almost miraculously afforded them—a table spread in the wilderness, and further furnished with the luxuries of butter, wine, and other delicacies daily brought in by the active purveyors who foraged the adjacent country. There were, too, preparations to be made for the guests who had promised to visit them at Easter; and there were joyful welcomes to celebrate the return of two of their own parties, who after many a “hair-breadth escape” succeeded in reaching the asylum of their fellow-soldiers. Nor were these their only visitors—many a flag of truce brought offers of capitulation, with threats of destruction; and friends and relatives had temporary freedom granted them, to negotiate with the defenders of the mountain fort. But the condition of capitulation,—*final banishment*—caused it to be rejected, even from the most persuasive lips. The nephew of Arnaud was amongst the deputies—as well might he have addressed the rocks of La Balsiglia.

Thus passed the winter; and when the snow began to melt, the combined army, faithful to their farewell promise, covered the adjacent country, and closely shut in the fortress of the Balsille. They numbered twenty-two thousand, ten thousand of whom were French troops, commanded by their celebrated general, Catinat. It was rather an unusual May-day *fête*; but the general (whom pressing business awaited elsewhere) had so prepared his bonfires and his *feux de joie*, that he thought to have concluded it in a few hours, and in a manner very different from the actual result. Indeed, how could this experienced soldier have imagined that, supported by the fire of seven thousand muskets, his chosen band of five hundred would endeavour in vain to make a breach in the rude fort of the mountaineers?—that the

besieged would, by a vigorous sally, cut in pieces these picked veterans, wounding and taking prisoner their commander De Parat? Still less could he have anticipated that his whole army would have retreated in consternation; and perhaps, less than all, that not one bullet of their adversaries should have been permitted to touch the brave defenders of the mountain pass. *Yet such are the astounding facts!*

On the eve of that memorable day, as Arnaud addressed the heroes—those faces which had been turned as a flint towards their enemies, were bathed in tears. Ten days after, as the Vaudois were about to celebrate the Holy Communion, notice was given from the outposts that the enemy, seeing the inutility of musketry, had brought some heavy artillery to bombard the fort, and planted a cannon on a level with it. A white flag was hoisted in signal of peace, and then the crimson ensign, and terms of capitulation proposed, to which the besieged made answer that, “not being subjects of the King of France, they could not treat with his officers—that they would defend the territory of their forefathers,” adding, “Let your cannon thunder, our rocks will not be dismayed.” Alas! this was a vain boast. After a cannonade of some hours a breach was made in the lower entrenchments; but though the Vaudois reached without loss their upper terraces, yet their sick were left behind; and if the night now obliged the assailants to retire, they knew too well the attack would be renewed on the morrow, and that they could no longer resist it. So calculated the French commander also; and so sure was he of victory, that he caused a proclamation to be made in the streets of Pinerolo to “all who wished to see the Vaudois hanged, two and two, to repair thither on the morrow.”

Ample length of rope was prepared for their bondage and execution, and waggons to convey the prisoners. The spectators did indeed behold the arrival of those waggons ; but their shouts of savage exultation were changed into lamentation when they saw them full of their own wounded. The Vaudois had once more escaped. The eagle's nest had been stirred up, and the birds had taken flight ; and when the foe, full of burning hatred, rushed the next morning to its destruction, they found the eyrie forsaken.

There were circumstances of painful interest connected with this last struggle. When the cannonade had succeeded in its work of destruction on the lower terraces, the assailed were obliged to leave their sick behind in their retreat to the upper fortifications, and to put to death the French officer whom they had treated with so much kindness as their prisoner—and who, with the chivalry of his nation, acquiesced in the justice of his sentence, and “pardoned them his death.” Indeed, it rightly lay at the door of his own general, who refused to give up any Vaudois prisoner as a ransom for this brave young officer. Another prisoner, taken on the other side, was treated with far greater cruelty ; as he refused to give any information respecting his brethren's movements, the French commander, Feuquières, ordered his legs and feet to be burnt off by a slow fire, but without attaining his end.

But where are the Vaudois fled ? When the cannonade ceased at the approach of night, the wretched garrison, convinced they could not any longer defend their position, determined on flight ; but how was this to be effected ? The sun of that hot day of strife had set, but a thousand watch-fires made a second day around them. What a terrible moment must that have been, as they looked from

their shattered fortress on the swarming host of enemies peopling the vale below, and on those blazing fires, as far as eye could penetrate ! But see ! the pillar of the cloud under whose shadow they have so often found a refuge, begins to rise over the mountains, and descends to wrap the vale in its sable mantle. The watch-fires grow dim, and the Vaudois band, mute, and almost breathless, pass by the hooded eye of the enemy's sentinels. Captain Poulat, a native of Balsille, offered himself as their guide, and led them by a terrific road along the sharp edge of a precipice. Groping with bare hands and feet, sometimes crawling on all-fours, and gathering up their bodies, so as to make sure that the ground over which they passed was not intersected by yawning cavities, they silently follow their experienced leader. At their first outset a slight accident had nearly betrayed them. As they were passing close to one of the sentinels—for it was impossible to avoid all the watches—a kettle carried by one of the fugitives escaped from his hands, and rolled on the ground. “*Qui vive ?*” cried the soldier. “*Fortunately,*” says Arnaud, with a pleasantry which we should not have expected from the grave commandant, “the kettle, not being one of those which the poets tell us uttered oracles in the forests of Dodona, made no reply, and the sentinel did not repeat the challenge.” This pleasantry scarcely occurred to the mind of the hero and his followers as they descended, at dawn of day, the precipitous Guignevert, knee-deep in the snow in which their footsteps were tracked by their merciless pursuers.

Thus, “hunted like the partridge on the mountain,” the wearied quarry flew with drooping wing from precipice to precipice ; nor could the most sanguine amongst them discern, in the wide waste before them, one place of shelter

or repose. Never had their situation appeared so hopelessly desperate; pursued closely by the enemy, without shelter, without resources, suffering from hunger and thirst, concealing themselves at night in the woods, and continuing their course by day under cover of the fogs which still providentially hung on the mountains, we find Arnaud recounting with gratitude that “on ascending to the hamlet of La Majère, in a vain search for water, a shower of rain, sent by Heaven in pity, relieved their urgent distress.”

But the Vaudois and their leader were not then aware of the changes which had taken place in the politics of their enemies. How many a pang would they have been spared, had they earlier learnt the important fact that Victor Amadeus would in three days decide, either to continue his alliance with France, or join the coalition—the allied powers of Germany, England, Holland, and Spain—against Louis XIV.! This extraordinary intelligence was communicated to them by the Commandant de Vignaux, whom the Vaudois took prisoner in a skirmish at Pramol. What an interval of racking suspense these three days must have been! On the decision of Victor Amadeus hung the future destinies of the Vaudois. Imagine, then, the joy of these poor people, and their thankfulness, when, on the 18th of May, offers of peace were brought to them on the part of the duke by two of their own countrymen! A rupture had taken place between France and Savoy; and Victor Amadeus, who perceived he should now want the assistance of his brave Vaudois to guard their mountain passes, turned to them with this gracious invitation,—“You have,” he said, “but one God and prince to serve—serve both faithfully. Hitherto we have been enemies, but henceforward we must be friends. Others have been the cause of

your misfortunes; but if, as is your duty, you hazard your lives in my service, I will also hazard my life for you; and as long as I have a morsel of bread, I will share it with you."

We shall see how this compact, so earnestly entered into on the part of his Vaudois subjects, was observed by Victor Amadeus. Nothing could at first be more full and cordial than the reconciliation, and, as far as it was possible, the reparation. Exiles were recalled, prisoners released, heritages restored, confidence reposed. The frontier passes were confided to the formerly proscribed Protestants, and the rank of colonel awarded to their chief. More precious still, the free exercise of their religion was accorded to them, and the same privileges granted to some thousands of their co-religionists of Dauphiny, Pragela, and elsewhere, who were permitted to settle amongst them. The scared and scattered Vaudois now arrived from all parts "like doves to their windows;" and who would attempt a description of the meetings between the returning exiles and emancipated prisoners with their long-divided parents and friends? They had drunk deeply of the bitter cup of sorrow; but the draught of joy was overflowing too. Still, its deepest spring must have welled in the hearts of the heroic band who had brought about, by the guidance of Providence, this blessed consummation. The Vaudois were most zealous in giving proofs of their gratitude to their prince, by enlisting in his army and shedding their blood in his defence; and all the Roman Catholic writers bear testimony to their zeal and the benefit of their services.

And now the valleys began to smile, the ruined hamlets to rise from their ashes, and the population to spread over the mountains; for the vital energy of the Vaudois is as

extraordinary as any other feature in their history. Like the flower which, trodden into the earth by the foot of the traveller, lifts again its elastic stem, or, buried beneath the snows of winter, shoots up at the first ray of spring, the moment the oppressor's foot is removed, and the storms of adversity pass over, the Vaudois Church springs into fragrance and beauty.

But the gleams of sunshine were brief and capricious. The wretched despot of France had but to raise his finger, and Victor Amadeus was ready to do his bidding.

Savoy and France were again allies, and in 1696 the duke signed a treaty, in which he engaged to banish from the Protestant valleys all the subjects of the aged despot, who had taken refuge therein from his persecutions. This blow was particularly aimed at Arnaud and seven of their most respected pastors, who were born in the dominions of France on the other side of the Alps, and who were now forcibly expelled from the homes for which they had so nobly struggled.

Protestant Europe opened their arms to the fugitives, and William of England and Prince Eugène offered high military preferment to the warrior-priest; but he wished to consecrate the remainder of his days to humbler duties; and having obtained from the Duke of Wurtemberg permission for himself and his companions in exile to settle in his dominions, he passed the rest of his life in the unobtrusive but active labours of his ministry, and the superintendence of the growing colonies.

In the midst of these colonies ¹ (which have been already noticed), at the retired village of Schönberg, of which he was the pastor, Henri Arnaud died on the 8th of September 1721,

¹ See Appendix B, p. 311.

at the age of eighty, leaving but a small patrimony to his five children beyond the heritage of his imperishable fame.

His mortal remains repose at the foot of the communion table in the little parish church ; his portrait hangs above ; and the following inscription is engraved in Latin on his tomb :

BENEATH THIS TOMB LIES HENRY ARNAUD,
PASTOR, AND ALSO MILITARY COMMANDER OF THE
PIEDMONTESE VAUDOIS.

THOU SEEST HERE THE ASHES OF ARNAUD, BUT HIS
ACHIEVEMENTS, LABOURS, AND UNDAUNTED COURAGE NO ONE
CAN DEPICT. THE SON OF JESSE COMBATS ALONE AGAINST
THOUSANDS OF FOREIGNERS ; ALONE HE TERRIFIES THEIR
CAMP AND LEADER. HE DIED SEPT. 8, 1721,
AGED LXXX.

This harsh edict of banishment, and the expulsion of the heads of their Church, was followed by the infraction of other engagements as solemnly entered into. The Vaudois children were still detained and tampered with ; fresh taxes were imposed, from which the Roman Catholics were exempted ; and, whilst every seduction of proselytism was allowed to be lawful in the conversion of the Protestants, they were on their side rigorously forbidden to propagate their religion on pain of death, and even denied the privilege of repairing or rebuilding their ruined churches. Thus the little communion had to exchange the activity of action for the yet more genuine Christian graces of patient endurance and forgiveness of injuries ; and in the midst of these their heavy trials an opportunity for their exercise was soon afforded them. A fresh quarrel with France called them



INTERIOR OF HENRI ARNAUD'S CHURCH, SCHÖNBERG.

once more to the aid of their faithless prince. In the year 1706, Victor Amadeus fled from his capital, then besieged by the French, and "fell back on Luserna, where the Vaudois joined him in great numbers;" but, closely pursued by the enemy, the vulture found no safety but in the nest of the dove whom his talons had so cruelly torn.

There is a curious spot of ground in the mountain hamlet of Rorà, to which the most sagacious land-surveyor or acute tax-gatherer would be puzzled to assign a purpose or affix a charge. It is not a field; it is not a garden, unless it be that of the sluggard in which—

"The wild brier,
The thorn, and the thistle grew broader and higher."

If a cemetery, where are the tombstones? But though the horticulturist and antiquarian seek in vain for objects of interest in this nondescript enclosure, the traveller visits it with somewhat of the same kind of interest as he regards the Oak of Boscobel.

One evening the family of our Vaudois Penderell Durand was called on to afford, what was never denied by Vaudois householder—shelter and refreshment to a weary and heavy-laden mountaineer. The poor man appeared agitated and exhausted, as he unfastened the straps by which one of those large baskets called *hotes* was slung on his shoulders, and laid it gently on the ground. The story does not inform us whether honest M. Durand expected such a guest; but if not, he must have been considerably surprised when the Duke Victor Amadeus, extricated from his *chaise à porteur*, claimed his protection and his secrecy. After remaining a fortnight in this humble but safe retreat, on departing, Victor Amadeus presented his host with his silver drinking-cup

and two spoons, granting him and his posterity, moreover, the very enviable privilege of being buried in the weedy enclosure above described, which at that time was the good man's garden, and, we trust, in better cultivation. If the royal goblet, which was sold in a time of distress, was not of more massive metal than the spoon which is still preserved by the descendants of Durand, it could have been of little service to them in the exigency to which it was sacrificed. The prowess of the Prince Eugène allowed the duke to leave his hiding-place in safety; and as he stood with his august cousin on the heights above his restored capital, he vowed to consecrate the spot by raising a temple on it to the Virgin Mary, which should vie with the proudest structures in Christendom. And he kept his word,—thousands and tens of thousands were laid with strange perversion on *her* altar, whilst a cup of cold water was refused to the disciples of her Son!

No proof of loyalty or attachment on the part of his Vaudois subjects seems to have influenced the conduct, however it might at the moment have touched the heart of Victor Amadeus. The ambassador of their steady friend, our “good Queen Anne,” the eloquent letter of their equally zealous patron, the King of Prussia, pleaded in vain for their emancipation; nay, even the subsidies granted by England and Holland, on the express stipulation that the duke “should preserve and replace the Vaudois, their children, and their posterity, in all their rights and privileges, as well as in regard to their abodes, trade, and the exercise of their religion, as to every other purpose,”¹

¹ *History of the Waldensians*, by M. Dielerici, Berlin, 1833, which contains the correspondence. See also *The Diplomatic Correspondence of Right Hon. Richard Hill*, edited by Rev. W. Blackley.

were all set at nought by an absolution of the Pope, who in full council declared the perfidious prince free from his own engagements to his subjects, and pronounced his treaty with England and Holland null and void.

Thus, until his voluntary abdication in 1730, Victor Amadeus continued to harass his Protestant subjects, banishing the French refugees, enforcing fresh restrictions, and curtailing in various ways the liberty he had solemnly pledged his word to maintain.

Little change marked the history of this oppressed Church until the end of the century, when Piedmont became a province of France, on the abdication of Charles Emmanuel iv.; and when, as greatly to their astonishment as delight, the poor people of the valleys found themselves placed by their conquerors on the same footing as their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen.

The French seemed now desirous of making up to them for former wrongs; and the following trait will show how readily the Vaudois responded to the kindness shown them. In 1799, when the Russians and Austrians attacked the French, three hundred of their wounded, fleeing before the enemy, arrived at Bobbio in the most lamentable destitution. The benevolent pastor, Rostaing, brought out for their necessities all that his larder and cellar afforded—a calf, twenty-five loaves, and some wine; whilst his wife tore up the family linen to make bandages for their wounds, and the parishioners contributed everything they could spare from their scanty hoards. When all was exhausted, except that Christian charity which faileth not, the pastor of Bobbio called his people around him, and proposed as a last kind office, that they should carry the wounded strangers across the mountains, and place them under the care of their own

countrymen. Hundreds of stout arms were found to bear the wounded soldiers "a distance of ten leagues over a lofty defile of the Alps, along precipices, and in the midst of snows which were impassable for beasts of burden." This generous action was turned against them by their own government, and would have brought on them the greatest misfortunes, if God had not sent the Prince Bagration to their aid, who, when their natural yet unnatural protectors would have laid waste the valleys, answered, "They are under the protection of the Marshal (Suwarrow); we have nothing to do with your Piedmontese antipathies."

Thus it appeared the hearts of strangers were disposed to aid, although those of their own sovereign and fellow-subjects were turned against them. There is, however, the same excuse to be pleaded for the Savoy princes as an eloquent statesman brought forward in the defence of one of our own monarchs, "there was behind the throne one greater than the throne," to whom many of their actions must be attributed; and throughout the long history of bigotry and oppression we distinctly see the finger of the Papacy beckoning, directing, or menacing; and the real cause of the harsh treatment of the Savoy princes towards their Vaudois subjects is comprised in the answer of Charles Felix, when refusing to receive their homage on his accession. "Tell them," he said, "that one thing alone is wanting—union with the Church of Rome."

We have now to point out the effect which the opposite extreme of revolutionary liberty had on the Vaudois Church. The restoration to civil equality, the free permission to rebuild their temples, to enter into the liberal professions, and to spread out into the plain, must have been of undoubted benefit to these fettered people; but the good

was not unmixed. The occupation of the French, and the necessity of serving in a foreign army, were productive of evil; yet vast was the preponderance of human happiness enjoyed under the dominion of their new masters. When the Emperor Napoleon I. was on his way to Turin, he noticed with peculiar urbanity the then moderator of the Vaudois Church, M. Peyrani, who formed one of a deputation to him. An English divine, whose name is now identified with the Vaudois, has given a portrait of this pastor of the Alps which has made an ineffaceable impression on the English heart; and it is from his pages, which have found their way into all our libraries, that the following dialogue between the hero and M. Peyrani is copied:

“*Napoleon.*—You are one of the Protestant clergy?

“*Peyrani.*—Yes, sire, and the moderator of the Vaudois Church.

“*N.*—You are schismatics from the Roman Church?

“*P.*—Not schismatics, I hope, but separatists from scruples of conscience, on grounds that we consider to be scriptural.

“*N.*—You have had some brave men amongst you; but your mountains are the best ramparts you can have. Cæsar found some trouble in passing your defiles with five legions. Is Arnaud’s *La Rentrée Glorieuse* correct?

“*P.*—Yes, sire, believing our people to have been assisted by Providence.

“*N.*—How long have you formed an independent Church?

“*P.*—Since the time of Claude, Bishop of Turin, about the year 820.

“*N.*—What stipends have your clergy?

“*P.*—We cannot be said to have any fixed stipends at present.

“N.—You used to have a stipend from England?

“P.—Yes, sire; the sovereigns of Great Britain were always our benefactors and protectors till lately. The royal pension is now withheld because we are your majesty’s subjects.”¹

Napoleon then asked if the Vaudois clergy were organized; and Peyrani replying in the negative, the emperor added, “Draw out a memorial, and send it to Paris. You shall be organized immediately.”

The emperor kept his word; the Vaudois pastors were enrolled with the clergy of the empire, and lands were allotted for their provision which yielded to each one thousand francs yearly. In comparison with the destitution to which they were reduced at the “Restoration,” they might, like their brother of “sweet Auburn,” have been reckoned

“Passing rich with forty pounds a year.”

That Restoration, which sent back their prince with added honours and territories, was a melancholy event for the poor Vaudois, whose claims were forgotten, even by their Protestant friends, at the Congress of Vienna. It is affirmed, on the one hand, that, relying on the good faith of their sovereign, they abstained from making any application; on the other, that a petition addressed to the Duke of Wellington remained unread—we hope not. We would not that our hero should have been, in the matter of Christian charity, behind Bonaparte and Cromwell. It is believed that “Lord William Bentinck, who escorted the King of Sardinia to his dominions after the peace of 1814,

¹ See *Narrative of an Excursion to the Mountains of Piedmont, and Researches among the Vaudois*, by W. S. Gilly. Fourth Edition. Pp. 31, 32.

benevolently urged the claims of the Vaudois upon their sovereign ;” but one of that prince’s first acts was to annul the privileges they had enjoyed during the dominion of the French, and to replace the galling fetters which had for ages “ entered into their soul.”





CHAPTER XIII.

The Emancipated Church.

PREPARATIONS FOR EMANCIPATION, AND CHARLES ALBERT'S
FINAL GRANT OF AN EQUALITY OF CIVIL RIGHTS AND RELI-
GIOUS TOLERATION TO HIS VAUDOIS SUBJECTS.



BEFORE entering on a new period of the Vaudois Church, and one of vital improvement and gradual progress, it will be advisable to take a survey of the condition—material, mental, and spiritual—in which the dawning century found her children. Modern historians, as well as still existing witnesses, agree in deploring it as one of lukewarmness, declension, and deterioration. The stir of politics, the spread of revolutionary principles, the idolatry of military power embodied in the dominant hero of the day, in whose army many of the Vaudois youth were enrolled, naturally exercised an influence over the manners and desires of the hitherto unambitious Waldenses. And there was another cause, whose consequences were still more

injurious. Destitute of the means of training their young men for the ministry at home, they were obliged to accept the bursaries liberally offered to them by the Swiss and German colleges, and thus imbibed much of the error which had begun to taint the pure stream of instruction in those celebrated seminaries. Thus the simple truths of the Word of God were, even in the Church of primitive Christianity, too often diluted by the philosophy of the schools, and its Divine Author set aside; whilst "justice, reason, and humanity" were substituted for the fruit of the Spirit, and the Christian graces of faith, hope, and charity.

But, thanks be to God, there were still in the bosom of their mountains pastors, whose heads were silvered over with age and experience, to protest against these innovations, and fathers and mothers who yet taught, and read, and prayed over their Palladium, the Family Bible; and surely the wonder would be, not that her candle burnt dimly, but that the light of the Vaudois Church was not entirely extinguished, when we consider the adverse gales to which it was exposed.

But in the midst of all these stirrings of evil, when here, and everywhere, the Church of God seemed to have no resting-place on earth, its great Shepherd was leading this little mountain flock by the only path, steep and briery as it was, by which they could escape the mazes of error in which their feet were entangled. The longer continuance of French influence, above alluded to, must have undermined the religious principles of the rising generation; and the timely check which they received was doubtless intended to sober their spirit and recall them to the pure first principles, so long kept inviolate by their forefathers. Their wants and woes also stirred the hearts of the faithful

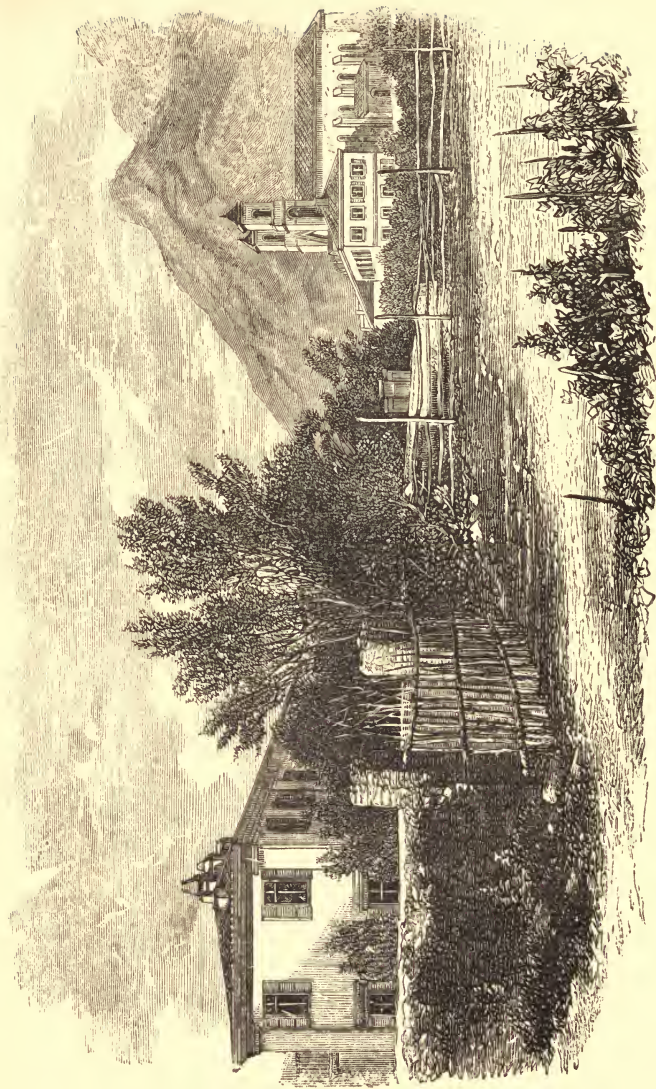
among all nations and denominations. The ambassador, the soldier, the divine, the Swiss pastor, nay, every summer tourist that passed through their valleys, felt desirous in one way or another to plead for and help them. It is a grateful task to trace the gradual progress of their own amelioration, as well as their preparation for the great work they were now called on to perform.

The first breathings of the Spirit on the fading embers were felt in the teaching of the young apostle of the Alps, Felix Neff, the memory of whose reviving ministrations is still cherished in the hearts and evidenced in the lives of his spiritual children. But he passed through their valleys like a gale of spring, which calls forth the early bud, but waits not for the unfolding flower; and mounting into higher and yet more sterile regions, he cultivated them by the efforts of his Christian love, while other philanthropists succeeded him in the vales below.

As the commencement of *material* progress, the building of the hospitals of La Torre and Pomaret may be noticed, for which contributions were sent from almost every country in Europe;¹ and it was an additional recommendation to the former institution, and well worthy the notice of travellers, that the duties of matron were performed *effectively and gratuitously* by one of the deaconesses of Eschalon, the *Protestant* and *practical* Sisters of Mercy of Switzerland, embracing all that can minister ease to the suffering body or soothing to the dejected mind, together with the regulation of accounts and the details of household arrangement.

A short distance from the hospital rises another building of recent date, the College of the Holy Trinity.

¹ The London Vaudois Committee, instituted 1825, contributed largely to these hospitals.



WALDENSIAN COLLEGE AND CHURCH, LA TOUR.

Dr. Gilly's efforts for the Vaudois Church and people are too well known to need introduction here ; but we may be excused repeating that this most beneficial restoration of the ancient school of Angrogna was one of their fruits. An anonymous donation of five thousand pounds from two individuals, together with other assistance, was laid out to great advantage in this commodious building, and its endowments, of which we shall speak hereafter.

Crossing the road a little further up the valley, still surrounded with vineyards and maize plantations, and shaded with mulberry trees, we trace the hand of a "master mason" in the beautiful Protestant church and Presbytère of the pastor of Torre Pellice, and the range of commodious habitations of the college professors. Nor does the stream of instruction water these alone ; it flows through the whole country, leaps from every mountain precipice, and feeds every valley. Schools rise in every part ; and if they were mainly indebted to the open hand of General Beckwith for their erection and endowment, let us also state that the inhabitants aided all in their power in their progress, and repay with grateful love the liberality of their late benefactor. Let it also be borne in mind, whilst we offer our silver and gold, our services and sympathy, that we can never cancel, though we may recognise, the debt we owe to this long-enduring Church, this faithful guardian of the bulwarks of truth.

But colleges and schools would have been of comparatively little use without books, of which there was a great destitution. These too were furnished through British generosity, especially of members of the Free Church of Scotland, as the well-filled shelves of the college library attest ; whilst books of humbler pretensions have circulated throughout the population, arranged as parochial libraries,

and affording much amusement and instruction during the long winter months. Large grants of Bibles have also been procured, completing the spiritual and mental stores, so long required and so long withheld.

But whilst these preparations were going on, the political horizon was dark and lowering, and seemed to promise little sunshine for their development, and it needed the unflagging spirit of their benefactors to cheer them over the rugged road. But the penetration which could discover, through the dark vista of the valleys, the Italian fields whitening for the harvest, was accompanied by the resolution to persevere in efforts, so often discouraged, for the preparation of those labourers destined to gather in the fruits. In truth, the patience of all was severely tried. Shut up within their valleys, denied the free exercise of their religion, yet doomed to observe the oppressive holidays of the Roman Church; to submit to every effort for the perversion of their children, yet forbidden, under the heaviest penalties, to defend their own opinions; dejected, poverty-stricken, and maligned, the Vaudois felt emphatically the sickness of "hope deferred." Each successive prince had disappointed their expectations; and although Charles Albert had granted them the power of rising in his army to the rank of officer, and had combated the bigotry that denied honourable burial to a Vaudois veteran, Major Bonnet; yet, when it was found he had given his permission to one of their chief enemies, the Bishop of Pinerolo, to build a church at the gates of La Torre, adding to it an establishment of the Propaganda, consisting of eight fathers, their hearts died within them. "Alas!" they said, "the persecutions of our forefathers are about to be renewed; and where is now the strength to meet them?"



OLD WALDENSIAN CHURCH NEAR TORRE PELLICE (LES COPPIERS).

The buildings, however, progressed, commodious houses for the residence of the monks of "the Priory of the holy religion, and of the military order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus," arose, and a handsome church, dedicated to the same pair of anomalous saints, was ready for consecration. And now alarming tidings are bruited abroad that the king, as grand master of the order of the patron saints, was to honour the ceremony with his presence, and that a large detachment of regular troops were already on their march to protect their sovereign during his visit to the valleys—to protect him amongst his own liege subjects! How galling were such precautions to their feelings, and how joyful the revulsion, when the answer of Charles Albert was reported to them! "I want no guards," said he, with his characteristic chivalry, "in the midst of the Vaudois."

The militia of the valley turned out to a man to welcome their prince, who drove through their files to the church, which, the service ended, he left on foot, and walked to his carriage in the midst of a crowd of his cheering subjects. At Luserna, whither the militia had preceded him, he stood at the door of the palace as they filed off before him, saluting each standard, and good-humouredly smiling at the energetic loyalty of one of the bearers, who took off his hat as well as lowered his colours as he passed him. The Table (or Board of Ecclesiastical Authority) had their share of the king's smiles, and the poor of each denomination an equal portion of his alms; whilst the syndic of La Torre had the unusual distinction of "the Order of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus" conferred on him. In commemoration of this visit, which appears to have made an equal impression on both prince and people, Charles Albert caused to be erected close to the church and monastery of the Propaganda, a marble fountain,

with this inscription, "Il re, Carlo Alberto, al popolo che l'accoglieva con tanto affetto."¹

But, although the aurora of emancipation streaked the eastern cloud, it was yet four years ere the full sun arose. Still the friends of the dejected people continued to point to the rosy dawn, and strove to prepare them for the business of the coming day.

In 1847 the Marquis d'Azeglio, a man of high birth, talents, and reputation, took into his consideration the claims of the Jews and their brethren in bondage, the Protestants of the valleys, and eloquently pleaded the double emancipation, in a petition addressed to the king, and signed by upwards of six hundred of the most influential persons in the realm. Having received the boon of a free constitution themselves, they generously wished their fellow-subjects to participate with them. Thus had liberty opened their hearts and expanded their minds; and long may it be granted to those on whom it has operated so favourably!

The 25th of February, 1848, arrived, and with it the emancipation so ardently desired, so long withheld—accorded, to his immortal honour, by Charles Albert. Letters patent were issued, granting the Vaudois an equality of civil rights with his other subjects, and free toleration in the matters of religious difference. This great Good News reached the people of the valleys, there congregated, as usual, at the market of Luserna, and put a hasty stop to their bargains. Cries of joy and mutual felicitations resounded on all sides; and where the happiness was too great for utterance, "the bounding heart and grasping hand," the tears of joy, the embrace of affection, were equally eloquent. Every one hastened home to tell the joyful news, which spread over hill and dale.

¹ "The King Charles Albert, to the people who received him with so much affection." The view, p. 254, shows the fountain.

That night, the illumination of the Protestant ambassadors and residents in the capital shed a second day over the broad streets of Turin, and brighter bonfires blazed amid the dazzling snows of the Alpine mountains.

“Yes, the long pilgrimage was done,
The perils past, the land was won.”

Blessings invoked on their earthly sovereign, mingled with songs of thanksgiving to their heavenly King, rose in grateful chorus that night from the long-enduring but now emancipated people of the valleys of Piedmont.

But there was yet another scene of rejoicing, a more general demonstration, which took place two days after, when the troops and deputations from all the parishes of the kingdom were convoked to express their gratitude to the king for the free constitution he had granted his people; and this time the poor proscribed Vaudois had their share—a generous share—accorded them without grudge. When the six hundred Valdesi arrived, headed by ten pastors, at the place of general rendezvous, the field of Mars, they were greeted with the liveliest welcome; “Long live our brethren of the valleys!” rent the air. The place of each band in the procession was to be decided by lot; but with a refined benevolence the committee of management, of which the Marquis d’Azeglio was the head, carried by acclamation the proposal that the Vaudois should march at the head of the corporation of the capital. “They have been long enough last!” they cried; “for once, at least, they shall be first.” But their honours did not end here; as the procession paraded the streets of Turin for four hours, the men of the valleys preceding with their floating banner of purple velvet,¹ on which was inscribed “Al re Carlo

¹ This banner was afterwards presented to the king, and received most graciously.

Alberto i Valdesi riconoscenti," their progress was one continued ovation. Cries of fraternity and welcome burst on all sides from these impetuous children of the south; handkerchiefs were waved, and bouquets thrown from fair hands; and even some priests, with an impulse of still higher bene-



ENTRANCE TO TORRE PELLICE.

volence, were seen to rush through the ranks to seize the hands of those they once denounced as worthy of death. At the "Place du Château"—that spot crowded with so many hallowed recollections—the children of its martyrs saluted, with voices trembling with emotion, the "Liberator King," as they loved to designate him, who stood surrounded by

his family and court to receive the thanks of his subjects for the free constitution he had granted them, which alone stood firm among the many given by various rulers when danger threatened them. It is worthy of remembrance not only that the constitution which gave religious liberty to the Waldenses has remained unchanged, but that the kingdom of Sardinia has become the Free United Kingdom of Italy, where religious liberty is established from the Alps to Mount Etna.

Carlo Alberto abdicated in 1849 in favour of his son Victor Emmanuel, and died in 1850. Nobly did his successor fulfil the promise given to the Waldenses, not only maintaining their liberties intact, but showing openly the regard he felt for them. When the German Emperor visited Italy, and again when his son the Crown Prince was at Milan, a deputation from the Waldenses was received with every mark of honour, and on the moderator, Pastor Lantaret, was bestowed the title of *Commendatore*. Well might Italy weep when “il re galant’ uomo” was laid low by the fatal fever, and when tidings were flashed in every direction that Victor Emmanuel had passed away from the throne of Italy. Never was sovereign more universally regretted, and well was it that his son and successor King Umberto could give the assurance that he would be faithful to the constitution and to the cause of religious liberty—well is it that he has thus far been true to his promise.

In the concluding chapter of our little work, we purpose giving the subsequent history of the Waldensian Church up to the present time. We have long enough called on our readers to sympathize in their sufferings; our pleasing task will now be to ask their participation in the brighter prospects of tolerance and emancipation that have opened around them.



CHAPTER XIV.

The Existing Church.

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH—PRESENT STATE OF THE WALDEN-
SIAN CHURCH—ITS MISSIONARY EFFORTS.



HAVING brought down the history of the Walden-
sian Church to the most important epoch of
religious toleration and civil emancipation, it
remains to give some detailed account of her
present position and future prospects, together
with the effect this desirable consummation
has had on both.

We have beheld the sorely straitened Church, like a
tempest-tossed vessel struggling into port, her masts bent,
her sails torn, whilst the little lamp dimly glimmering at
her prow, her compass, and anchor, were the only posses-
sions remaining to her crew from their long warfare with
the winds and waves. Should we wonder, then, to find that
they were at first somewhat cast down and dispirited; and

that doubt and dejection caused them to mistrust the sudden flash of hope so often baffled, so nearly extinguished? The limbs of the captive, long fettered and disused, do not regain their muscular spring at the first touch of the emancipator's hand.

The humane and judicious physician, aware that the galling pressure acts long after the chain is removed, will not urge premature exertion until he has administered his gentle restoratives, and the outer air has circulated around the nerveless form.

Thus was it necessary to deal with the captive of centuries, and to minister to the revival of those sick ones, into whose soul the iron yoke of bondage had entered. Soon the precious fruits of love and gentleness were reaped; soon the languor of protracted suffering began to pass away, and hope and activity revived.

It is well that we should pause here to observe God's dealings with this suffering people, that we "may understand the loving-kindness of the Lord" towards them, in the way in which He prepared them to enter in at the open door He was so soon to set before them.

In 1823, just a quarter of a century before the proclamation of the edict of emancipation, Dr. Gilly, vicar of Norham, visited the Waldensian valleys, and surely he did so by Divine guidance. His work, *Waldensian Researches*, found a place in many a library, and, among others, in that of the Duke of Wellington. It was here that a brave soldier, wounded and maimed at the battle of Waterloo, met with it—can we say by chance? He had found the Lord as he lay on his bed of suffering; and rising from it a new man, he desired to live for God's glory and for the good of his fellow-men.

The perusal of the *Waldensian Researches* while he waited for an interview with the duke, turned the future course of General Beckwith's life into a new channel. It was in 1827 that he paid his first visit to the valleys; and from that time till his death, in July, 1862, he lived for the Waldensians. We must refer our readers to the memoir of



FELIX NEFF.

the details of his valuable life, and of his unwearied efforts for the good of that people. It is written by Pastor J. P. Meille, of Turin, and dedicated to Miss Beckwith.

The year before General Beckwith first reached Torre Pellice, Felix Neff, the reformer of the Church of the Hautes

Alpes, had been there, and had been the means of spiritual blessing. This was another link in the chain of gracious Providences ; the living waters were beginning to flow freely in the mountain valleys, and Italy was to be fertilized.

The primary object to which the recovered liberty and energies of the Waldensian Church were directed was—Missionary Effort ; for, with an indifference to the improvement of their own social condition, which some may have deemed supine, with little eagerness for the gains of commerce or the promotion of remunerative industry, they have gone forward with holy zeal to “sow the Italian fields” for an imperishable harvest. We have pointed out the efforts made for the advancement of education in the valleys during their latter days of bondage, and how patiently Christian philanthropists carried on their work of preparation, even when the prospect of success was least encouraging ; and when the door was opened, where, but for the hidden school-master who was then at work, should we have found so many able, zealous, and eloquent men to fill the stations ready for them ?

We have seen how persecution and sickness had compelled the Waldensians to resort to Geneva for education and for pastors, and that thus the French language in great measure took the place of Italian.

The first sermon in Italian after the lapse of centuries was preached by Pastor Malan at San Giovanni in 1849 ; and this language is now being gradually resumed. Of the openings for missionary labour which presented themselves, we may begin with the story of Pinerolo, whose name recalls to the reader of Waldensian history so many painful associations.

Situated on the confines of their valleys, its fortress harboured their invaders ; thousands of innocent captives

perished in its dungeons, and its numerous monasteries were the receptacle of their abducted children. This dreaded Pinerolo, however, was the first object of interest to the emancipated Vaudois; and thither, the Bible in their hands and the love of God and man in their hearts, they proceeded as soon as their emancipation opened the way before them.

We might naturally anticipate a stormy reception for them; but nowhere did they meet with a kinder welcome. Every time the pastors returned to proclaim the "glad tidings," more and more pressed joyfully forward to receive them, until the "upper chamber" could no longer contain those who thronged to listen to them.

The Bishop of Pinerolo and the majority of his clergy, it is true, poured threats and imprecations on the intruders; but more than one Roman Catholic came forward to advocate the grant of a spot of ground on which their Protestant fellow-subjects might build a temple; and even a Romish priest spoke to the same effect in the Chamber of Deputies at Turin. "I desire to maintain," he declared, "the freedom of Protestant worship among us, because I desire to maintain the freedom of Catholic worship throughout the world. You will be more logical in your toleration than in your restrictions."

To build a church large enough to contain the rising congregation was the next cherished hope of the Waldensian mission. In 1853 the Moderator of the Vaudois Church, the late beloved and lamented Dr. Revel, visited, with Madame Revel, the United States, where they met with a most cordial reception. Among other munificent aids the American Protestants undertook the expense of the temple at Pinerolo. The work of building the *living* temple has gone on steadily, and besides the substantial place of worship in which the

congregation now assembles with Signor Cardone as pastor, many villages in the neighbourhood have been visited and Churches formed.

We next proceed to Turin, which, as the capital of Piedmont, was very properly selected for the site of the first Waldensian temple out of the valleys.

That this Protestant church might be worthy of the beautiful city in which it was raised, it was built in a more costly style than quite accords with Waldensian simplicity; but the plain men of the valleys yielded to the judgment of those whose generosity furnished the principal means, and whose taste directed their appropriation. The most considerable contributors to this building were General Beckwith, and Signor Malan, a Waldensian banker at Turin. But the Waldenses contributed what was of more value than gold and silver—pastors of worth and talent equal to the difficult situation they were called to fill. Much sympathy was felt by the friends of various nationalities in the erection of this church, and in the emancipation which had made it possible. An excellent clergyman of the English Episcopal Church in Scotland, the Rev. D. T. K. Drummond, who was here in 1852, in his delight and enthusiasm, mounted the scaffolding, trowel in hand, that he might have his share in the joyful work, finding on the highest part of the scaffolding, in spite of his lameness, the indefatigable General Beckwith, a member of the Church of England, by whose efforts and munificent generosity the church in the Corso del Re, one of the most frequented parts of the capital, was opened December 15th, 1853, Pastors Bert and Meille conducting the services in the morning in Italian; Pastor Lantaret, vice-moderator, and Pastor Revel, moderator of the *Table*, in the afternoon in French.

The congregation soon amounted to many hundreds ; and although the Waldensian pastors do not admit their converts to the Lord's table without a long course of instruction, and a satisfactory evidence of their faith, there were many communicants. Of course the Romish priests asserted as usual that the *evangelici* bribed their converts ; but those who offered to turn Protestants on these terms went away bitterly disappointed.

The same excellent pastor, J. P. Meille, has ministered up to the present time to the Waldensian congregation, Protestants by birth ; the service being conducted in the morning in French, and in the afternoon in Italian. Missionary work is carried on by an evangelist. Signor Augusto Meille, Signor Pons, afterwards Signor Weitzecker, son-in-law of the pastor, and then Enrico and Guglielmo (William), Signor J. P. Meille's sons, have followed one another in this capacity. The work progresses steadily in Turin itself and in the villages around ; there are several schools, half the pupils in which are the children of Roman Catholics ; and though payment is required, while the communal schools are free, the evangelical schools are always quite full. Many a gladdening fact proves that the power of the Holy Ghost has not been wanting ; and while scriptural teaching has the first place, secular education has not been forgotten, five-sevenths of the candidates for admission into the technical schools having been successful.

In Genoa, or Genova la Superba, the city of palaces, the success of Pastor Geymoat was not behind that of his forefathers, the *Barbes*. With him was associated Signor Mazzarella, as indefatigable a labourer as himself, and one of the ten catechumens received into the membership of the

Waldensian Church on the very day that the foundation of the temple at Turin was laid.

The hired room was soon too small for the inquiring throng; and that none might be sent empty away, the pastors hit on the expedient of repeating the service, thus preaching to three congregations; as soon as one was dismissed another standing ready at the door to fill their seats.

Efforts were now made to provide means to build a temple, and the monastic establishment of "La Madre di Dio" being in the market, a generous banker, already mentioned, Signor Malan of Turin, guaranteed the required sum to pay for it—two thousand pounds. But Charvaz, Archbishop of Genoa, rushed to Turin, and throwing himself at the feet of the Queen Dowager, entreated her to use her influence to prevent the impending calamity. The king yielded to his mother's supplications; but, by the wise influence of M. Cavour, he did so by *requesting* the relinquishment of the purchase; and another site having been procured by Signor Malan, the first was given up; and now in a spacious church erected in Via Assarotti the Lutheran and Waldensian congregations assemble, the one on the ground floor, the other in the hall above.

At the meeting of the *Table* in 1853, an application for admission into the Waldensian Church was received from Dr. Luigi Desanctis,¹ formerly rector of the Maddalena at Rome, and *Qualificatore*, or Theologian, to the Inquisition. Being appointed to deal with heresy, he was allowed to study "heretical" books, and the truth entering a heart prepared by God, he became a true disciple of Christ. He was of course compelled to leave Rome, as neither persuasion nor flattering offers of promotion could induce him to

abandon the truth. In 1847, passing through the gates of Rome with his eyes closed, that he might the less realize the painfulness of the step he was taking, he went to Malta, where he employed his pen for the defence of the Gospel. Among other writings he contributed a series of articles to the *Record* newspaper, under the title of "Popery, Puseyism, and Jesuitism at Rome," which were afterwards published separately, in English. The Italian edition, called *Roma Papale*, has the addition of valuable notes. A small work, *The Confessional*, was also written at Malta, an English translation of which is published by Partridge and Co.

The acquisition of such a convert as Dr. Desanctis was an event of no small importance. A man of truly Catholic spirit, he sought only to lead men to the Saviour; and for five years he refrained from connecting himself with any body of Christians in particular; but, as he said himself, "his thoughts always turned to the Church of the Valleys, because he recognised it as the true, primitive, apostolic, Italian Church, and that an Italian, sincerely seeking the good of his fellow-countrymen, should not belong to any other Church than the ancient Italian Church." A difference of opinion separated him for a time from this Church; he then joined "the Brethren," and for some years resided at Genoa; but after a better understanding of the facts of the case he returned to the Waldensian Church, to which he was cordially attached to the end of his life, and became Professor of Church History and Theology in her college. He died on the anniversary of his birth, December 31, 1869.

The city of Nice, sheltered by the Alpes Maritimes, and a favourite winter residence of the English, Americans, and

others, was noted for its superstition and bigotry; and thirty or forty years ago it was not possible to give away a Bible or tract without incurring the risk of imprisonment, spies being placed over the English residents. The era of liberty, however, began, and a subscription was set on foot for building a Vaudois church, two English clergymen and others coming forward to promote the cause. Nice became a French town in 1859; but a Waldensian Church still flourishes there. Pastor Léon Pilatte was long the able preacher of evangelical truth in that place of worship; but health and other causes brought about his retirement. He remains at Nice, however, and his talents are now employed in preparing young men to be evangelists. His successor is Pastor Weitzecker, whom we have already heard of at Turin.

We have read in a former chapter of the poor minstrel of Favale. In 1854, a year or two later than the time then spoken of, a little chapel, a schoolroom, and a house had risen as by magic from the manual labour of some who had become *free* masons, and by the supplying and directing benevolence of Sir Culling Eardley. The remarkable family or clan Cereghino now consisted of forty-two persons; persecution had by this time ceased, though the priest of course withdrew all his favours from them. The Papists had threatened to burn out the Cereghini. When one of the papists' own houses took fire, the Cereghini ran to extinguish the flames! Again, a house near their church was on fire; it was observed by the catechist Volpini, who, headed by his flock, and by means of great exertions, subdued the fire. The example of the Cereghini, as they continued to walk in the path of truth and obedience to God, was not without its influence; and in a short time other disciples of Jesus

Christ were found in the beautiful valley of Fontanabuona. The present evangelist is Stefano Cereghino.

In Tuscany a secret work had been in progress since 1845, when the Scotch church was opened by the Rev. Dr. Stewart at Leghorn, for the benefit of his own countrymen indeed ; but the light could not be hid. The British and Foreign Bible Society also entered the field with the precious Book ; and deeply interesting were the accounts given by Captain Trotter and other travellers of the careful distribution of copies of God's Word, and then of the power of the Holy Ghost that accompanied the reading of it.

But that reading had to be in secret, and the printing press had to be hidden ; for the free constitution which had been granted by the Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1848 was soon withdrawn, and fierce was the persecution that followed. All who listened to "heretical" teaching, or who read "*Scritti profani*," as the Holy Scriptures were called, were arrested and thrown into prison.

The young pastor Geymonat was discovered reading the Bible to a small company ; he was at once arrested and condemned to imprisonment. Count Guicciardini, and others of good social position, who had joined the church in 1850, shared the same fate.

The story of Francesco Madiari and his wife Rosa excited deep interest, and attracted the attention of statesmen in the Protestant countries of Europe, whose remonstrances at length prevailed to open their prison doors, after they had endured nineteen months of suffering and separation.

Francesco was the son of a small landed proprietor near Florence ; Rosina Pulini, a Roman, had been in service in an English family to whom Francesco was acting as courier, and she became his wife. Having left service, they kept fur-

nished apartments in Florence, which were frequently occupied by English families. Rosa often read the Bible to her husband in English, as there were then no Italian Bibles in circulation; and though up to this time Roman Catholics, they were so disgusted by the carelessness and profligacy of the priests, and by the blind superstition of the people, that they attended the Swiss Protestant church. Their conduct was so exemplary that even their enemies could charge them with no fault excepting that of reading the Bible. A few months after Count Guicciardini's expulsion they were arrested and thrown into prison, and for ten months were kept there without trial, not being permitted to see one another all that time, excepting for a few minutes at the request of Mr. Scarlett, the English *chargé d'affaires*, and that in the presence of their jailers. They were at last tried and condemned to imprisonment; Francesco to fifty-six months' hard labour in the prison at Volterra, Rosa to forty-five months' imprisonment in the Ergastolo at Lucca.

The Misses Senhouse and others obtained permission, with some difficulty, to visit the "Conjugi Madiari detenuti per empietà," whose sufferings and misery, though great, were borne with Christian fortitude. At last, either by the intervention of the Queen of England, the King of Prussia, and others, or for some unknown reason, the prisoners were liberated, but banished from Tuscany; and the husband and wife met on board the steamer which was to convey them to Marseilles. The hardships which this faithful couple endured so injured their health that the husband did not long survive his release, and Rosa never entirely recovered.

But while imprisonment and death were the portion of many believers, the Word of God was not bound, and in three years and a half 20,000 copies of the Scriptures had

been circulated. Thus, while the enemy prevailed to hinder the work outwardly for ten long years, God's hand was stretched out to bless, and as many as 85,000 copies of Holy Scripture were sown in the Italian fields during that period.

Leaving them to do their secret work, let us return to the valleys, and see the fruits which increased liberty produced there.

The labours of Dr. Gilly and of General Beckwith excited much interest as they became known in England and in other Protestant countries. Among others a party of friends from the west of England visited the valleys in 1849, and again in 1853, to see for themselves this land of conflict and of martyrdom, and to inquire how they might help in the blessed work of revival and restoration.

As the time approached for their return home, a number of Waldensians were invited to meet these English friends at the college at La Tour. This was the more easily done as the Synod was holding its meetings at the time.

Let us quote from a letter written with reference to this period.

“After a prayer offered up by the *Moderateur Adjoint*, the Rev. P. Lantaret, pastor of Pomaret, in the absence of the Moderator, Dr. Revel, he stated the object of the meeting nearly in the following terms: ‘Their kind friends the English ladies and gentlemen present, with that benevolent interest so long evinced by their country towards the Waldensians, wishing to leave behind them some evidence of their visit, have desired this meeting, in order to learn their most urgent claims for assistance. He would not dwell on their merely temporal wants, many and pressing as they certainly were, for they had long been accustomed to poverty and privation, and grieved for it only as barriers to education

and progress. It was the predominant aim of their benefactors to restore them to their former position as a missionary church; but how could those whose utmost efforts were required for a bare sustenance spare money or time for education? That they valued it when generously procured for them the crowded state of the college and schools incontestably proved.' And then the eloquent pleader began his



WALDENSIAN ORPHANAGE.

list of deficiencies and wants, comprising a new wing to the college, foundation faculty chairs for two more professors, normal schools, and missionary endowments. But all these wants were beyond the power of the friends who made the offer of help. At last 'an Orphan Asylum' was mentioned. The great number of orphans—according to a census taken

at the time we write, 223, many of both parents—arose from the poverty and hardships endured by the parents, and the frequent destruction of life by the treacherous avalanche in their search for pasture. All English hearts present were moved by the pathetic appeal, and resolved to adopt the orphans of the valleys. The meeting closed with prayer. The travellers went their way, and their first care on reaching home was to draw up a prospectus of their association, heading their appeal with the following title, suggested by the Rev. Dr. Gilly: ‘The British Ladies’ Association for establishing an Orphan Asylum and Industrial School in the Valleys of the Vaudois, Piedmont.’”

The appeal was generously responded to by a limited number of friends; the publication of the present “short history” realized the sum of £200; pens, pencils, and needles went to work, every effort being made prayerfully; and at last the funds were sufficient to warrant the hiring of a suite of commodious rooms at La Tour, where, in December, 1853, as many orphans as could be accommodated were admitted. Amongst their number were five little girls, collected a short time before by Madame Revel, and placed under the surveillance of an excellent person, once a pupil of Paston Oberlin, of the Ban de la Roche. Marie Négrin accompanied her charge into their new home, and remained in the capacity of housekeeper, the more important office of directress or governess being filled by Mdlle. Marie Sircoulon, a deaconess from M. Germend’s establishment at Neuchâtel, in Switzerland.

Many touching anecdotes could be told of the dear children who shared the benefits of the home provided for them, and instances might be given of the way in which they grew in truth and obedience. One little girl, with the English name

of Catherine Long, who was early called to the heavenly home, and who had given touching evidence of being the Lord's, wrote in her copy-book of her own accord, "Il fallait que Jésus Christ mourut pour sauver Catherine Long." It was found after her death, the last line in her copy-book.

A beautiful house was ultimately built in a fine situation at the entrance of Val Angrogna, and we would earnestly recommend all who go to La Tour to visit it, and to see for themselves the perfect cleanliness and order of the house, and the charming intelligence and brightness of its happy inmates, under the care of the same excellent directress who had charge of the orphanage from the beginning, Mdle. Marie Sircoulon.¹

In an early section of our history of the Waldensian Church we essayed to paint a dissolving view, portraying her transition from the meretricious splendour of the usurping ritual of Rome to the simple grandeur of Pra del Tor. In the period of more than eight centuries which has since elapsed, two scenes of equal importance have been witnessed in the Church of the Valleys; not dissolving views, rather we should call them engravings whose lines are indelible.

A very little change in the scenery, a few slight variations in the outward costume, and the Synods of Pra del Torno, of Champforans, and those which now take place at Torre Pellice might occupy the same canvas.

As a specimen of the Synods held in the capital of the valleys we may give an abridged account of that which took place in 1854. A full report was printed in the *Buona*

¹ We must refer our readers for further details to the little book, of which a new edition is now in the press, "*Sketch of the Origin, Progress, and Present Condition of the Orphan Asylum at La Tour*," published by James Nisbet and Co., Berners Street, p. 257.

Novella, the first Waldensian periodical published in Turin, under the editorship of Signori Meille and Desanctis.

“Pastors were present from the fifteen parishes of the valleys, namely: Val Pellice: Bobbio, Villaro, La Torre, Angrogna, San Giovanni, and Rorà.

“Val San Martino: Prali, Rodoretto, Massello, Maneille, and Villasecca.

“Val Perosa: Pomaretto, San Germano, Pramollo, and Prarustino.

“The members of the Synod took their places at nine in the morning in the new church. Divine service was celebrated in Italian by Signor Desanctis. Italian hymns resounded through the temple, and prayer rose to God in our own beautiful language. It was the first time for many centuries that Italian had been used in a Synod.

“The text was taken from Acts xx. 28, and under four heads treated of the duties of pastors and their flocks.

“After the religious service the Synod assembled for business. It was composed of sixty-five members, of which thirty-one were pastors and thirty-four elders or lay deputies from the different parishes. The eldest pastor took the chair provisionally, and the names of the members being called over, they passed to the election of the president, vice-president, secretary, and assessors, which was done by ballot. The first decision of the Synod was, that every sitting should begin with prayer. The sittings to begin at eight in the morning, to continue till twelve, and, after an hour's repose, to meet again till the evening; but on the two last days, owing to the press of business, they began at seven and six. The *Table*, that is, the executive power of the Vaudois Church, which ceased to exist during the sitting of the Synod, read a report of its operations for the

judgment of the Synod—their work having been already examined, and a report prepared by a commission of ecclesiastics and laymen appointed for that purpose. We should like to give this in detail, so interesting is it to follow the progress of our Church; but we must limit ourselves to a brief extract.

“THE TABLE.

“1. What had been done for the interior edification of the Church since the last Synod in 1851. 2. What had been done for the relief of the poor and sick. 3. What had been done, or attempted, for the furtherance of instruction and education. Lastly, What had been done for the work of evangelisation. The *Table* gave an account of its pastoral visit made in 1852, when it had not found any great disorders, public worship being generally frequented, and family worship also being general; at the same time it saw the necessity, and expressed a wish, for the establishment of a home mission for the reviving and strengthening of faith and piety.

“It also called for a catechism to supersede that of Osterwald—one more simple and comprehensive, suited to the use of families and schools. The *Table* stated that 3,003 destitute or sick persons had been relieved, and that notwithstanding unfavourable circumstances arising from the disease in the grapes, increase of taxes, and some expensive but necessary repairs, the *Table* had been able to add three beds to the hospital of La Torre, and three to that of Pomaretto. An orphan asylum had been established this year, in which eight orphans are fed and educated; and here the *Table* gave the praise due to Mr.

and Mrs. Bracebridge, who were the principal benefactors in the commencement of this charity.

“From works of charity the *Table* went on to give an account of the work of instruction. There are 169 elementary schools, attended by 4,421 scholars. In the College of La Torre there are eight professors and ninety-three scholars. The course of instruction consists of the Latin, Greek, and Italian languages, history and general literature, philosophy and the natural sciences. Mention was also made of the normal school and of the Latin school in the valley of Perosa. All these works were advancing under the blessing of God.

“Finally, the *Table* spoke of the work of evangelisation, and this was the longest and most interesting part of the report, and we regret exceedingly not to be able to give those precious details in full, but prudence obliges us to be silent.

“After the report of the *Table*, the Synod called for that of the examining commission, which was read, and from which it was seen that the *Table* had kept within, rather than exaggerated, the reality; and the Assembly, overcome by a feeling of gratitude to God, called for a prayer of thanksgiving; and thus ended the first sitting of the 29th, at six in the evening.

“The morning of the 30th, the Assembly, sensible that they ought to act dispassionately, and not allow themselves to be carried away by feeling, decreed that each article of the report should be examined separately. Many hours were occupied in this discussion, which ended in the Assembly declaring their entire satisfaction with the work of the *Table*, and resolving that, ‘The Synod having read and considered the report of the *Table*, declares that during the present moderatorship, it has faithfully and zealously

discharged the duties of its administration for the good of the Church.'

"The order of the day was the examination of the plan of an ecclesiastical constitution, prepared by a commission charged with the task by the Synod of 1851. The project being read by M. Meille, one of the commission, the general discussion began; but as the parishes had not had time to sufficiently consider the proposed constitution, they decided on not going into the examination of the articles, but postponing the discussion till the next Synod.

"At half-past five the sitting was dissolved with prayer, and at half-past seven of the same evening the Assembly met again—not for business—but for prayer and mutual edification. The principal object of this reunion was to unite in prayer with the Synods of two evangelical Churches in Scotland, who on the same day and same hour were to unite in prayer to God for His blessing on evangelical Churches. The president invited the foreign brethren present to address the Assembly; and the Rev. Dr. Stewart, and the Rev. Mr. Hanna, ministers of the Scotch churches at Leghorn and Florence, the Rev. James Currie, Incumbent of Rusholm, Manchester, and Sir Harry Verney, Bart., successively addressed words of exhortation and encouragement to the Waldensian Church, clearly proving that she was a primitive and also an Italian Church; some beautiful and earnest speeches were made in Italian and French; prayer was also offered in both languages; and though the discussions of the day had been long and fatiguing, these three hours, passed in prayer and mutual exhortation, appeared but a moment, and all felt that the blessing of the Lord was among them.

"The sitting of the 31st was opened, as usual, with read-

ing the Bible and prayer. The first object that occupied this sitting was, not exactly the abolition of mendicancy, as that does not come under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but a rule forbidding the Church to authorise it; and it was decreed, that where there are poor in a parish, the consistory must provide for their subsistence; and if there are not sufficient funds, the pastors and the elders must make the collections, and not give letters of recommendation authorising the poor to beg.

“ They then went on to discuss the proposition made by the *Table*, of substituting a new catechism for that of Osterwald. The proposition was received, and a commission of three pastors formed, who in eight months should prepare a new catechism to be submitted to the judgment of the whole body of pastors; and besides, it was decreed, in consideration of the importance of the work, that the Synod should meet in May, 1855, for its final sanction.

“ The Home Mission for the revival of religion in the bosom of the Church was the order of the day. The Synod, feeling its necessity, unanimously decreed that such a mission should be established.

“ After many propositions of local interest, the important question relating to the election of the elders, and the duration of their office, was brought forward; an interesting discussion ensued, and was left unfinished when the sitting closed at six o'clock. The Synod met again at eight, with closed doors, to read official communications from the Synods of the Free Church of Scotland, the Reformed Dutch Church of New York, the Congregational Church of America, and from the Synodal Commission of the Evangelical Churches of France. The Synod decided on maintaining fraternal relations with these Churches, and charged

the *Table* to convey to them an assurance of the gratitude and Christian affection of the Vaudois Church.

“The absence of General Beckwith and the Rev. Dr. Gilly, two of the greatest benefactors of the Vaudois Church, was noticed in the Synod. The love and reverence every Vaudois bears to these valued friends caused their absence to be deeply felt ; but this very reverence prevented any public inquiry into the cause ; in this private meeting, however, the reasons were given why neither could accept the invitations sent them to be present in the Synod. The Assembly charged the future *Table* to express to General Beckwith and Dr. Gilly the regret their absence caused, and to assure them of the lively affection and gratitude the Vaudois must ever cherish towards them.

“Thursday, the 1st of June, the Synod assembled at seven in the morning, when the discussion relating to the elders was resumed, and the decision was, that they should be nominated from the heads of families in their respective parishes ; that the elders, before being installed into this office, should undergo an examination in doctrine and conduct ; and that when an elder should no longer be able to fulfil the duties of his office, he should retire with the title of honorary elder, and his successor be immediately elected.

“After decisions of local interest, the important question of education came under consideration, and measures were taken for the better regulation of the college ; and a petition from the valleys of Perosa and San Martino, for the establishment of an industrial school, was recommended to the consideration of the *Table*, which was also prayed to use every means to prevent the interests of instruction among the Vaudois from being compromised, by the laws shortly to be brought forward in the Chambers on public instruction.

“Considering the immense importance of providing the Church with good ministers, the Synod decreed that the examination of the candidates must have the approbation of the absolute majority of the entire body of pastors, the absolute majority of those present not being sufficient.

“After some minor propositions followed the important and interesting discussion on the establishment of a Faculty of Theology for the Vaudois Church. The Synod of 1851 had expressed such a desire, and the *Table* had since been working to carry it into effect. The present Assembly unanimously agreed in the principle ; but the question arose as to whether the Faculty of Theology should be established in the valleys or in some great town of the state. Strong reasons were brought forward on both sides, and much eloquence displayed, especially by M. Revel, pastor of Bobbio, and M. Meille, of Turin. Various members of the Synod took part in the discussion, and the assembly decided that the Faculty of Theology should be established at La Torre.

“*Friday.*—The Synod met at six in the morning, in order to release the deputies earlier from their attendance, and enable them to return to their mountain homes. Various subjects of economy were discussed, and then the religious and moral education of the young men of the college, which was recommended to the special consideration of the Church and the directors of the college, and called forth an eloquent speech from M. Meille on the subject of education.

“Before closing their deliberations, the Assembly expressed by a unanimous vote the gratitude and devotion of the Vaudois Church to their king, Victor Emanuel II., under whose protection the present Synod met in liberty and peace. Cordial thanks were voted to the Syndic of Ia

Torre, to the national guard, and also to the people of La Torre and of San Giovanni, for the kind and hospitable reception the members of the Synod had received at their hands. After this they passed to the election of the executive power, called 'The Table,' of which all the old members were re-elected by a large majority.

"A religious service, which lasted about an hour and a half, concluded the Synod, the remembrance of which will not be easily effaced from the memory and hearts of those who had the happiness of assisting at it."

Amongst these were some from our own country, who expressed great satisfaction, and even astonishment at the number of eloquent speakers and sound divines which composed this remarkable assembly.

The description of the Synod of 1854 might be that of each succeeding one as to the usual order of proceeding; but three years later an important addition was made.

The work of evangelization was spoken of, and "it was the longest and most interesting part of the report given in that year." It was not, however, till 1857 that the Commission of Evangelization was appointed, having for its first president Pastor J. P. Revel. God, who had led this witnessing people hitherto, was soon to open a wide door and effectual before them, that the evangelist with the Bible might enter even into the very city of the popes.

The war between France and Austria in 1859 and 1860 set Northern Italy free from civil and religious despotism, and the states of Tuscany, Modena, Parma, Austrian Lombardy, and Romagna united themselves with Sardinia. A little later Garibaldi accomplished the deliverance of the kingdom of the two Sicilies, and by his brilliant victories, under God, Southern Italy was added to the dominions of Victor

Emmanuel. The Roman States, it is true, still interposed themselves between the two divisions of the kingdom, and French bayonets maintained the wretched rule which made the territory of the "Holy Father" a kingdom of darkness.

But God's time—the only right time—came at last. The Franco-German war drew away the French troops from Rome, and the army of Victor Emmanuel, with the Bible-carriage at their head, drawn by a dog, entered the "Eternal City" at Porta Pia. The wilderness journey, with its conflicts and martyrdoms, was past, rivers and mountains crossed, and the land of promise (is not every mission-field a land of promise?) entered by the Israel of the Alps with the sure title-deeds in hand, written in blood and sealed by God's faithfulness,—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

Thus all Italy was free to the Waldensian missionary, and not to him alone, for pioneer as he was, and as it was fitting he should be to his kinsmen according to the flesh—Italian among Italians, a labourer specially trained by God Himself, who appoints to every man his work,—the number of others who have entered from time to time cannot be told. Of these last it is not our task to speak; only let it be said of each man and of each society, “Ye did it unto ME.” “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace!”¹

¹ NOTE ON THE OTHER EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN ITALY. From *A Guide to Evangelical Work on the Continent of Europe*. London: J. Nisbet and Co., 1878.

I.—THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN.

The two Waldensian pastors who in 1850 began the work of evangelization in Florence, having on the return of the Grand Duke been imprisoned and

A complete history of Italian evangelization would lead us too far from our subject,—“A History of the Waldensian Church,” and that a “short one.”

It has been ours to tell how God preserved the people who “kept His truth so pure of old,” reviving them when faint from the battle-field, where their cause had often well-nigh perished; and how, when deprived of their shepherds who had pastured them in the everlasting truths of God’s Word, they were in danger of forgetting their high calling, God sent His messengers to encourage their hearts and strengthen their hands. We can but glance at the large field they were called to cultivate, where, excepting in favoured spots, the labourers are still very few.

exiled, along with the Madias and Count Guicciardini, some English ladies belonging to the community commonly known as “Plymouth Brethren” took charge of the instruction of the new converts, who naturally adopted their views.

Meanwhile the work prospered exceedingly in Piedmont, especially in Turin, under the direction of Pastor Meille, and in Genoa, under Pastor Geymonat, when a division took place in the young Church. Those who separated themselves from the Vaudois Church did so under the influence of “the Brethren,” and when Dr. Desanctis (an eminent convert from the Roman priesthood) perceived this, he hastened to return to the Waldensian Church, to which he was cordially attached to the end of his life.

These various congregations of “the Brethren” decided in 1864, under the direction of the Rev. J. R. Macdougall of Florence, and of Signor Gavazzi of Rome, to unite themselves into one body, called “The Free Christian Church.” Those “Brethren” who refused to enter into this union form a Church with about 500 communicants, of which Count Guicciardini of Florence is considered the Director.

II.—THE FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

This Church, formed, as we have said, by the union of various congregations of “the Brethren,” has adopted a Confession of Faith and a Constitution, and has taken a position between Presbyterianism and Congregationalism. It has thirty-seven stations and twenty-four preachers, eight of whom have been ordained by the Synod; and it is now endeavouring

When the kingdom of Italy was completed two-thirds of the people could neither read nor write. We may safely say of the third not numbered among the *analfabeti*, few had ever seen a Bible. The work to be done was immense, but labour makes men strong, and to spiritual work the Waldensians are giving all their best men. After providing for the fifteen parishes of the valleys, the rest of the hundred labourers are dispersed all over the kingdom.

It was in May, 1860, that the Table decided to remove the Theological College, established at Torre Pellice in 1828, to Florence. The author of *The Awakening of Italy*, the Rev. J. A. Wylie, LL.D., thus refers to this: "In the

to provide theological training for its agents by means of a college at Rome.

N.B.—All the evangelical Churches in Italy are "Free," being not under the control of the State, but ruled by their own Synods.

III.—THE WESLEYAN CHURCH IN ITALY

Consists of two districts, that of Rome and that of Naples, over each of which an English pastor is superintendent. There are twenty-eight stations, with as many Italian ministers, who meet in conference in each district once a year.

IV.—THE BAPTIST CHURCH.

The English Baptist Churches have two missionaries in Rome, assisted by three Italian evangelists; English missionaries also at Genoa and Naples; and Italian evangelists at Civita Vecchia, Leghorn and Turin, as well as in Sicily. The American Baptist Missionary Board has also one congregation in Rome, under the direction of a missionary and native evangelist, and missions at Milan, Modena, Cagliari and Barletta. There is also an independent Baptist Church at La Spezia.

V.—THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF AMERICA

Has a mission in Italy, begun in 1873, under the direction of the Rev. L. M. Vernon, who employs fifteen ministers and several evangelists.

VI.

There are Episcopal, Presbyterian, and other services in all the important towns of Italy for the benefit of English-speaking travellers.

autumn following [the Synod of 1860], two professors, MM. Revel and Geymonat, with their families and eight students, set out from La Tour in the valleys, and settled in the capital of Tuscany. From the glens of the Cottian Alps to the city of Cosmo it was not, as was said at the time, 'a step, but a stride.'

"The liberality of a few Christian friends had opened for them the Palazzo Salviati, the former residence of an Archbishop of Florence, and this fine structure now became the head-quarters of their operations. Coming from this spot, the Waldensian evangelist will no longer present himself to Italy as a stranger. Educated here, he will speak the tongue of Italy as Italians love to hear it spoken. Thus the Church of eighteen centuries, and of thirty-six persecutions, has planted herself where she can best perform that work which no other has so good a right as she to undertake."

We may add, with reference to the manner in which Waldensians speak Italian, that they are free from peculiarity of accent or provincialism, and their training in Florence has been a great success in perfecting them in the language.

We give honour where it is due in giving the Bible the first place in the evangelization of Italy; and the next to the colporteur, who distributed it often at the risk of his life. In 1861, 85,000 copies had been disseminated. The truth found its way to men's hearts, making them free indeed. Then, as souls were born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word, and by the mighty Spirit of God, the evangelist and the pastor found work in abundance prepared for them.

We have told of the way in which our Waldensian friends set forth to labour as soon as the Edict of Emancipation was passed, and that after many years of difficulty and hindrance

the way was again opened to them. About seven years after the removal of the Theological College to Florence we find twenty-four mission stations scattered over Italy, most of them with schools, where, through the ministrations of a Waldensian pastor or evangelist, old and young were growing in knowledge and in grace.

In consequence of a recommendation of the Synod held at Torre Pellice in 1874, Italy was marked off into five districts, in each of which an annual conference is held to consider the state of each congregation, and to discuss the means of remedying any existing evils. The value of these conferences is undoubted. The districts are as follows: 1, Piemonte—Liguria; 2, Lombardo-Venetia; 3, Tuscany; 4, Rome—Naples; 5, Sicily.

It was no unusual thing for crowds to assemble when an evangelist first preached in any place, either from curiosity or to hear what might be said against the priests; but when faith and holiness were pressed upon their attention the numbers diminished; or it might be that they were alarmed at the denunciations of a Lent preacher, sent to hinder the progress of the gospel. A certain number of earnest listeners remained, however, who formed the nucleus of a Church, and this is still the experience of those who begin new missions.

While the valleys, with a few exceptions, supply the evangelists, the various countries of Europe have from time to time contributed funds to meet the expenses of the work. Scotland has, from the very beginning of Dr. Stewart's labours in Tuscany in 1845, been foremost in generous and prayerful help. The interest which Gilly's researches and Beckwith's work had excited in England had waned, but in 1868 Dr. Revel visited this country, and with Dr. Guthrie

addressed meetings in many of our towns, explaining the position of the Waldensian Commission of Evangelization, and the need of organized assistance from England in the mission work.

In response to this appeal a meeting was held in London, March 11th, 1868, at the residence of the Honourable Arthur Kinnaird, M.P.,¹ when the Waldensian Church Missions Aid Society was originated, and the London Central Committee² was formed, which, in connection with many auxiliaries throughout England, remitted for the first year £1,070 to the Evangelization Committee in Florence, and the following year £1,127, receiving the grateful thanks of the Synod for the timely help. From £1,500 to £2,000 a year is now sent. An Italian deputation visits this country nearly every year to plead their own cause; and it may be considered fortunate that these dear brethren require our assistance, and are therefore compelled to come among us and give us the refreshment and interest of their presence.

We will now accompany Signor Prochet, the president of the Commission of Evangelization, in one of his missionary tours, and take a glance at the field cultivated by the Waldensian Church in 1877.

I. *Piemonte-Liguria*.—Courmayeur, at the foot of Mont Blanc, is the first station reached after crossing the Alps. A Church of sixty communicants meets in a neat little chapel, of which Signor Costabel is the pastor, and the children are gathered into a school. The scattered villages of the Val d'Aosta have been visited, and in many of them there are converts. In the town of Aosta meetings are held in a room, opposite to which is a fountain erected to com-

¹ Now Lord Kinnaird.

² Office, 118, Pall Mall, S.W.

memorate the flight of Calvin. The priest of this place having died, his sister sent for the pastor, Signor Girardone, and entreated him to speak to her of Jesus.

There are many witnesses for the truth here, a colporteur constantly travelling from place to place to sow the seed and to nurture its growth. Many opportunities occur of speaking to fellow-travellers in the *diligence* and the railway train, and by the road-side.

In Ivrea, the pastor, D. Revel, and a colporteur are working with success; the people not only purchase Bibles, but, like the Bereans, search them diligently. The district, extending from Mont Blanc to the river Po, is a large one, including many villages; in one of them, Trausella, out of six hundred inhabitants, fifty declared themselves in favour of the gospel, and, after careful examination, eighteen of these were received as communicants.

The railway will now take us to Torrazza, where the brethren from Chivasso and many other villages have their meeting-place; and in an hour we may reach Turin, where the religious meetings held with reference to the Œcumenical Council caused an awakening and a spiritual movement which brought large congregations to the church.

A two hours' journey by train, branching off at Bussoleno, brings us to Susa, a station established by Mr. Fell, the engineer of the famous Mont Cenis Railway, who has ever shown a lively interest in the Waldenses. *Providing the necessary means, he applied to the Commission for an agent. Signor P. Fornerone was sent to minister to the little congregation and to visit all the villages, conversing with the people and selling books. On one occasion he had to leave for two months on account of illness, and the opponents thought the work would cease; but to their surprise the meetings con-

tinued; and they were told, "If the minister is absent the Lord Jesus abides in His Word, and is in the midst of us by the Holy Ghost to direct and teach us."

In this valley there were at one time many Waldensians, but the awful persecutions of which we have read swept them nearly all away. The remains of an ancient Protestant temple are to be seen, and on the wall of a house in the village of Chiomonte the last words of a long Latin inscription are, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" At Salabertrand, near the famous bridge, a name and date were found well fitted to stir the enthusiasm of all who are interested in Waldensian history,—“Jean Michel père, 1689;” the name of the one man who lost his life in the hard struggle by which nine hundred Waldensians took the bridge, defeating more than two thousand soldiers who barred the way.

From this point we might visit the other Church known by the name of Vaudois,—the sister Church of the Albigenses in the Hautes Alpes in France, of which we have often read in connection with the honoured name of Felix Neff. It may be reached from the railway station at Oulx, on the Italian side of the Mont Cenis tunnel.

We must, however, follow the story of our Italian Church, the Chiesa Valdese of Piedmont, which Henri Arnaud led in its *Rentrée Glorieuse* across the mountains by the bridge of Salabertrand, to fight again for its liberties with the sword of steel, till with the sword of the Spirit she should win holier victories throughout Italy.

We will not linger at Pinerolo, where Signor Cardone ministers so faithfully to the Waldensians of the locality and of Prarustino, as well as to the soldiers and to other Roman Catholics, keeping back false inquirers who desire to live in sin, and insisting on a walk becoming the gospel;

rather let us visit Coazze, one of the mountain villages in the neighbourhood.

We might have reached this place in its pleasant glen from the station of Sant' Antonino by crossing the mountain range near the "Sacra di San Michele," a Popish church very picturesquely situated on the top of a high and barren peak. Having, in one way or another, reached Coazze, we find a very nice little church capable of holding a hundred and fifty persons. The work began at this Alpine village about four years ago. On a market day at Pinerolo, a young man from hence, named Bramante Prudente, was induced to purchase a New Testament from the colporteur. This led to his becoming interested in the truth, and to his settling near the town in order to attend the services, and soon after this to his becoming a believer. He then returned to Coazze to make a livelihood by selling stores, and among them Bibles and tracts. From the sale of these an interest in the gospel spread, and then a desire for a visit from the evangelist. In January, 1874, Signor Cardone arrived there and preached on the words, "What must I do to be saved?" the use of the public hall being allowed. Forty men decided to embrace the gospel, and they have been carefully instructed; but probably a few only will be admitted to membership at present, for experience has shown how necessary it is to be cautious.

The usual rule of gathering a Church of living members before building a place of worship had to be dispensed with in this village, on account of the impossibility of finding a place in which hearers might assemble.

Meetings have been held at Giaveno, reached from Coazze by a pleasant walk down a glen under magnificent chestnut trees. The stations of Vigone, Giojetta, and San Secondo,

are also visited by Signor Cardone, and at the two latter are good schools.

From Pietra Marazzi, where there is a school, many emigrated to America, and the work became discouraging. Service being held in the evening, the day was often spent in worldly concerns; but an improvement has taken place.

Genoa, as already mentioned, was one of the earliest stations of the Waldensian Church. The sudden death of the young evangelist Jalla and his wife, in 1866, from cholera, was a great trial to the congregation; Signor Prochet was removed from Pisa to fill the blank. Four services on Sunday and two during the week, besides dealing with individuals, gave him constant work, which God owned in converting many to Himself. The two weekly meetings have been changed into several smaller gatherings at private houses, and the Sunday-school teachers assemble at the house of the pastor every Friday evening to prepare the lesson for the next Lord's day. A Protestant hospital is a great comfort to the sick, who were often persecuted and annoyed in the public hospitals under the direction of Roman Catholics. Superstition, infidelity, and a low level of morality are difficulties in the way, but the work is on the whole encouraging. A man who threatened to throw any Valdesi out of the window who came to his house was afterwards an applicant for admission to the Lord's table. Another wondered at the change in himself and in all his tastes; card-playing, on which he had spent so much time, lost its attractions, and the Bible became his great delight. Signor Prochet being now President of the Commission of Evangelization, and consequently often absent on missionary tours or on deputation work in England, an assistant pastor shares the pastoral work with him.

San Pier d' Arena, formerly under the care of the evangelist F. Bruschi, is not an encouraging mission, as many of the people engaged in manufactures are employed on the Lord's day. Favale is also dependent on Genoa, and Signor Cereghino visits regularly twelve villages, climbing mountains, crossing valleys—fatiguing to the body, perhaps, though he is cheered by seeing fruit—

“For the Master's work makes weary feet;
But it leaves the spirit glad.”

Three years since one of the brethren was deserted by his wife on account of his becoming evangelical, taking away a little child which has since died.

Two members of the Church at Genoa having moved to Oneglia, a new station has been opened there. Sir Culling Eardley was once “invited” to leave the country because he gave away a Bible at this place, but happily times are changed.

At Vallecrosia near Bordighera, the Istituto Evangelico, established and maintained by Mrs. Boyce, is doing a work among destitute boys and girls, who but for this would have remained without education. Many an Italian citizen, in years to come, will bless her memory.

At Nice, as we have seen, a Waldensian Church is still one of the shining lights, though the town is no longer Italian. Last year a sum of 12,000 francs was subscribed, a sum sufficient to cover the expenses of Signor Weitzecker's church and schools. A Waldensian colony of some thousands is to be found also at Marseilles, enjoying the ministrations of one of their own pastors. As we have spoken of one colony, we may as well here mention another, established in recent times, not in France, but far away across the Atlantic, at Rosario,

in South America. The colonists long desired a pastor to be sent to them, and this request was at last complied with. Some difficulties having arisen, Dr. Lantaret undertook the commission to visit the Church, which has been often bereft of its pastor. Signor Ugone, of Rorà, was the last sent thither, succeeding Pastor Solomon, who remained only a short time, and is now ministering to a colony of Waldensians in Texas.

II. *Lombardo-Venetia*.—In Milan, the ancient capital of Lombardy, Signor Turino has been ministering to the Waldensian congregation for seventeen years, and has good reason to rejoice over souls brought to Christ, about ten new converts being yearly added to the Church. In ten years, from 1867 to 1877, the number of communicants rose from 80 to 155, and there are five other denominations in Milan! On one occasion, when Signor Turino was preaching, he observed a young man who was very attentive, and speaking to him after the service, he asked him if he loved Jesus. He replied, “How could I possibly not love Him, who loved me to the death?” The pastor having offered to come to his village, he joyfully acceded, saying, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!” A man who heard him preaching exclaimed, “Surely you must be an evangelical; you speak only of God and of Christ, and not at all of the Madonna.”

The great disadvantage of a dark and close place of worship, full to suffocation, has been a hindrance to the full development of the work in Milan, and great efforts have been made by the earnest and self-denying pastor, well known to many by his visits to this country, to raise the needed funds to provide a more suitable locality, and it is

hoped that he will soon accomplish his task. His flock raise more than any other missionary congregation in Italy, and, the building once secured, the Church would be self-supporting. A young and able minister has been placed in Milan to share the pastoral charge with Signor Turino, who lately devoted part of his time to a new kind of evangelistic work, that is, a "*carro Biblico*," or Bible-waggon, the gift of a lady. We may not stop to tell how this gift came as a remarkable answer to prayer on the part both of giver and receiver. A *colporteur* has charge of the horse and waggon, a pastor joining him from time to time, and having, for the payment of a *lire* or two, obtained permission to occupy a corner of a public square, he proceeds to display and commend his books, reading short passages as the people gather round him. On one occasion a religious procession was deserted by the greater part of its followers, as they were attracted by the unusual sight of a Bible-waggon, and they did not return to it till they had possessed themselves of a large number of Scripture Portions.

Several young men had in one place surrounded the waggon, sneering and laughing at Signor Turino and his books. Our friend begged to be listened to for a moment, opened the New Testament, read to them the touching story of the prodigal son, and concluded by saying, "Who among you does not wish to be received at the last day by his supreme Judge as the prodigal son was received by his father?" No answer, but the sneer and taunts ceased at once, and the young men disappeared, with the exception of one, who lingered near the waggon, and at last asked for a book. Signor Turino offered him tracts; but he said, "No; give me the story of the prodigal son;" and he took a New Testament.

Como, situated at the south end of the lake, has a Waldensian Church and pastor. Several places round the lake are visited, Chiasso and Colico among the rest. At Argegno, an hour's sail from Como, there are a few believers; and two hours' climbing up a mountain brings us to San Fedele, in Val d' Intelvi, where a good work is progressing after much opposition. Of the twenty-four persons who received the truth in 1867 none have withdrawn. Few could read at that time; but when the gospel with its beneficent results came, there were soon many Bible readers, and *fête* days are spent by the people in studying the Scriptures with their families. The syndic of a neighbouring village was among the early converts.

Brescia was at one time much tried by internal dissensions; but the earnest labours of Signors Comba and Pons, and now of Signor Quattrini, have been blessed. Diligent household visiting, preaching only Christ, and speaking of Him, have borne fruit at last, and there is a steadily increasing company of believers. One of the converts was the most popular Roman Catholic preacher, a man of unspotted character, beloved by all. At Castiglione delle Stiviere and Guidizzolo, only six miles apart, a pastor and a schoolmaster divide the work between them. When Signor Comba visited it, the charming simplicity and reality of the informal meetings delighted him, and he found it a most refreshing oasis in the surrounding bigotry and superstition. It was then the eastern boundary of evangelical work, but the occupation of Venice has now extended the line to the Adriatic. A woman who first heard the gospel when the late pastor, C. Malan, came to dispense the Lord's Supper, at once believed, and was admitted among the communicants. A man having received a tract, read it, and immediately bought

a Bible; he then bought a Bible with references, that he might examine them for himself; and it is not wonderful that his knowledge of the Word was remarkably clear.

At the walled city of Verona, Signor Lissolo has rather to rejoice over the progress gained in public opinion than in the numbers added to the Church. A Roman Catholic Oratory, has, however, lately been purchased for the use of the congregation. For a year or two the pastor could not gain access to his sick people in the hospital; but now he is always civilly treated, and when he went to a dying woman who wished to partake of the Lord's Supper, he found that the nurse in charge of the ward had prepared the table with great care and cordiality. A young man was persecuted by his family for attending the evangelical church; but his father was so much astonished at his firmness and piety that he was led to seek the cause, and reading the Bible for himself, he became an earnest inquirer, then endeavoured to bring all his family with him. A lady of rank attended the meetings in spite of every effort to draw her away.

At Venice the work has from its commencement been very interesting and encouraging. When this city was first opened to the heralds of the cross Signor Turino was sent there, accompanied by Mr. McDougall, minister of the Scotch Church at Florence, to examine the field. The crowds that attended the preaching of the gospel were very great; even when these diminished a real work remained, and amid some disappointments many proved to be disciples indeed. Dr. Revel afterwards visited this Church, and wrote with much joy of the progress of the gospel. The object of his visit was to complete the purchase of the Palazzo Cavagnis, a large and commodious palace near the church of Santa

Maria Formosa. Signor Comba preached there to large numbers, while the pastor's family, schools, and the school-master find accommodation in the ample building. The Sunday-evening lectures, chiefly on controversial subjects, were largely attended, and an earnest congregation also steadily increased; the character of the people is more sedate and solid than in other parts of Italy. On Signor Comba's removal to Florence, where he is one of the three professors in the Theological College, Signor Pons became the pastor here. Other denominations have set to work, and it is to be hoped that each one will be careful not to interfere with the discipline of the others by accepting members whom they have dismissed for misconduct.

There are many calls for teachers from various parts of the province, and the two pastors are constantly making missionary tours. At Treviso and Pederobba there are meetings in private houses, while in the mountains of Friuli are some staunch confessors who stand fast, notwithstanding the fierce persecutions to which they are exposed. One of the dear brethren was taken by night by some neighbours, and beaten to death.

Guastalla, on the right bank of the Po, is the last of the stations we have to mention in this district; the soil is hard, but the pastor toils on by God's help.

III. *Tuscany*.—Florence is the central station in Italy, as the college and the printing-press are here. The congregation was formed into a regular parish in 1866, of which Signor Geymonat was the pastor. Dr. Desanctis preached on Sunday evenings, on Tuesdays he lectured on the Reformation, and on Fridays on the Old Testament. The power of the priests was great, and few women attended the

services ; but the preaching of Dr. Desanctis produced a great impression. There were thirteen students attending the college this year of which we are speaking, and they passed a good examination in ecclesiastical history, dogmatic theology, polemics, Christian archæology, practice of preaching, and exegetics. Dr. Revel often remarked that none of the students trained at the college disappointed the hopes entertained of them, while converts from Romanism often failed. The college is open to students of every denomination, and the education is provided free of charge.

A second Church was afterwards formed, of which Signor Geymonat became pastor ; and though not altogether in connection with the Waldensian Church at first, it is now united with it.

Signor Augusto Meille then ministered to the Waldensian congregation assembling in an elegant chapel built on the ground-floor of the Salviati palace ; he is now, however, the agent in Italy of the Religious Tract Society of London, while the Claudian Press is under the direction of Dr. Wills.

In 1871 the Waldensian missions sustained a grievous loss in the death of Dr. Revel, which took place at Florence in the month of June. The evangelization of Italy had been the loved work of his life, and it may be said that it was under the excessive pressure of that work that he finally sank ; but he had the satisfaction of seeing the crowning of his aspirations for Italy in the opening of Rome and the commencement of a vigorous mission there.

Shortly before his death he resigned the office of President of the Commission of Evangelization, and was succeeded by Signor Prochet of Genoa, an appointment which gave much satisfaction in Italy, as well as to friends in this country.

Dr. Revel's first studies were carried on at La Tour, subsequently at Geneva and Lausanne, and lastly at Berlin, under Hengstenberg and Neander, after which he was ordained pastor in his native valleys. In 1848 he was chosen Moderator of the Waldensian Synod, an office which he continued to hold for about nine years, contributing largely to the increase of earnest life and work among his brethren. He afterwards became Professor and Principal of the Theological College, and President of the Commission of Evangelization. His friend Dr. Stewart justly described him as a man remarkable for zeal, tempered with prudence, and for that tenacity of purpose which led him to persevere in spite of all discouragements; the secret of his success being that he lived very near to God, and with a single eye to His glory. His widow, Madame Revel, was his constant and invaluable support in all his labours, and watched him day and night in his last illness. By a happy suggestion of Dr. Stewart, a fund was raised to serve as a memorial of Dr. Revel, in the form of a college bursary, and as a means of support to Madame Revel, who is to have the interest of the money during her lifetime. She resides at Florence, and is as a mother to the students at the college. Dr. Revel was succeeded in the professorship by Signor Comba of Venice, who now also acts as pastor of the Church in the Salviati palace (with some assistance from his brother professors, Geymonat and Albert Revel), and is editor of a high-class periodical, *La Rivista Cristiana*. Some other periodicals are also published at the Claudian Press, edited by Signor Augusto Meille, *L'Amico di Casa*, *La Famiglia Cristiana*, *L'Amico dei Fanciulli*, and *Strenna dei Fanciulli*. The other Waldensian congregation meets in the Chiesa dell' Oratorio, where Signor Geymonat enjoys the occasional

assistance of Dr. Giuseppe Comandi, the originator of an Orphanage and Industrial School for Boys, which is carried on in the suburbs. We must not forget to mention the Protestant Hospital, in which the patients receive the visits and instruction of evangelical pastors. A Protestant cemetery also became a necessity on account of the annoyance experienced from Roman Catholic opposition. The addresses given at the interment of Protestants are often attended by great crowds, who listen quietly and respectfully to the evangelical pastor.

It has always been the aim of the Waldensian missions to cultivate a spirit of union; and in the conference held in Florence in the spring of 1873, it was proposed by Signor Prochet, that an inter-missionary committee should be formed to draw the different Christian bodies together into friendly relations. Signor Prochet had just returned from the New York Conference of the Evangelical Alliance, animated more than ever by the spirit of union which pervaded that remarkable assembly.

The discussions and religious meetings in connection with the Œcumenical Council and the dogma of papal infallibility, had a stirring and reviving effect in Florence as well as in many other parts of Italy, and it was one of the means used by God for preparing the people for the gospel.

Lucca is second to none of the Italian cities for ignorance and superstition. For centuries she has boasted of possessing the "Volto Santo," the countenance of our Lord carved in wood by St. Joseph! It had almost been decided to abandon so unpromising a soil, but it was urged that something must be expected from the native place of Vermigli (Peter Martyr). A man came one day to witness a baptism; he was observed to dip his finger in the water

and to put it to his mouth. On being asked the reason, he replied that the priests informed the people that the Protestants baptized their children with rum, and he was testing the truth of the assertion. He was commended for what he had done, and advised to bring all their statements to the proof. The chapel is built on the site of the temple which existed in Reformation times.

Let us hope that the Lucchese will learn to boast more of Diodati, a native of their town who was the author of one of the best translations of the Bible, than of the Volto Santo.

Pisa had as one of its earliest evangelists our excellent friend Signor Prochet, and Dr. Desanctis gave a course of lectures there which produced a great impression. The work is in some degree hindered by the distance of the church from the town, but there are two prosperous schools and a Sunday school, which is superintended most successfully by Dr. Tito Chiesi. Many strangers pass the winter in this place, to whom the pastor preaches in French; his labours extend also to Guardistallo, Pontedera, and Montopoli.

Leghorn, as we have said, was awakened from her almost total darkness in 1845; and no man was able to shut that opened door, though it was only in secret that the Bible could be read. Now the Word of God is free, and a large Waldensian Church is making good progress, after having had difficulties and trials to overcome. There are seven schools; those in the Piazza Manin established by the Evangelical Schools Committee are most interesting and flourishing, and though payment is required, 268 pupils were gathered into them last year, four-fifths being the children of Roman Catholics. Dr. Stewart, minister of the Scotch Church, and Mrs. Stewart, have the chief direction of them, and it is delightful to see their interest in the work, and the affection

shown to them by the children. The preaching of Gavazzi, the discussions of Ribetti with the priests, and his earnest addresses at funerals and on other public occasions have brought the truth before many, and Signor Rostagno is now seeking to lead souls to Christ. One day the pastor, in praying at the bedside of a dying man, used the words of the thief on the cross, omitting the word "to-day." The dying man whispered, "To-day, to-day" (*Oggi, oggi*), and in a few hours he was with the Lord.

Passing over to the island of Elba, we find two stations. That of Portoferraio is not very prosperous; it takes some time to uproot evil customs, but the schoolmaster-evangelist is at work, and we trust that fruit will appear in due time. The other station, Rio Marina, is one of the most interesting in the mission-field of Italy. At first the opposition was very great, and the authorities had to be called upon to protect the evangelists, but now deep regard and sympathy is felt for the converts, and the people welcome the pastor and delight to hear the Bible read. The schools are very interesting and prosperous; not a fourth of the children are from Protestant families. The population being composed of seafaring men and their families, many of them are frequently absent, and the disproportion between the numbers of young men and young women leads to the evil of mixed marriages; yet there are some to be found who stand firm, and choose Christ rather than earthly happiness without Him.

IV. *Rome—Naples.*—When Rome was opened to the Bible and the evangelist, Signor Prochet spent three Sundays there to initiate the mission. There was great difficulty in finding a room to meet in, one landlord after another being alarmed

when he discovered for what purpose the room was required. At last premises were secured in the Via dei Pontefici. Signor Ribetti was removed from Leghorn to fill this station, and schools were established for which more than a hundred children were offered; the children were a passport to the parents' houses, and crowds were gathered at the services in the large hall, which was once a theatre.

Special thanksgiving services were held in Florence, Venice, and other large towns when Rome fell, and the unity of Italy was completed. It was a joyful occasion indeed when the King of Sardinia, who had granted the free constitution which Cavour's statesmanship had honestly carried out, was crowned King of Italy. Several colporteurs entered Rome with the army, and though their Bibles were at first detained at the railway station, they were soon restored. The repressive measures of the papal authorities had stamped out every spark of light. The fall of Rome was attributed by some to the benignant influence of the stars; by the Roman Catholics it was spoken of as a sacrilegious act; there were the two extremes of incredulity and superstition. There was no difficulty in proving the papacy false, though it was not easy to persuade men that they were sinners needing a Saviour; but the gospel that overthrew pagan Rome is gaining its victories in Rome papal.

By the exertions of Dr. Stewart £6,000 were collected to purchase a place of worship, which was obtained in the Via delle Vergini; but hitherto it has been impossible to occupy it, though the owners are allowed to rent it to others. In less than two years, forty-eight Roman Catholics had been received into membership by Pastor Ribetti; and the Marquis J. E., a colonel in the pope's army, together with his wife, joined the Church. A carpenter, who had been noted for his dis-

solute character, heard and received the gospel ; the change in his conduct impressed his wife, and the whole family became members. Signor Enrico Meille was sent as assistant pastor, and when he was removed to Turin his brother Guglielmo took his place. The schools have prospered, and now some of the elder pupils are being trained as teachers.

It is wonderful to think of a Waldensian Church being established in the city of the popes, but this has been a fact for eight years. Perhaps the martyrs of the valleys may have seen by faith the triumph of God's truth in the "Eternal City," and the Waldensian pastor preaching there, no man making him afraid. A hundred communicants have been already admitted to the Lord's table.

An effort is being made to reach the higher classes by a young ladies' school, under the care of Miss Caroline Dalgas, who was trained at Torre Pellice, and then became the teacher of the Leghorn schools in Piazza Manin.

Ancona, on the Adriatic, has her pastor, Signor Benemani, who visits many places in the neighbourhood. Crowds assembled when the remains of the president were committed to the earth, and the pastor preached to a thousand people.

In the early days of evangelical preaching a young pastor, Gregori, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, laboured earnestly for the conversion of souls both at Naples and in Sicily, as if he had known that his time of service on earth would be short. Too soon for the Church he was called to his heavenly rest by an attack of cholera, in 1867, while in Sicily. Other lips have declared the gospel message, but unworthy members gaining admission to the Church, many difficulties were experienced, until after a time of severe

sifting, when those members were expelled. The schools have been more successful than usual in Italy, the Rev. A. F. Buscarlet gave his valuable co-operation in the establishment of some of them, and those connected with his own Church have delighted all who have visited them.

Immediately after Gregori's death, Signor Appia and Signor de Vita took up the work, Appia having left it for a time ; thirty new members were admitted, among them the mistress of the Commercial School. A new centre of work was found in Fragneto l' Abate in Benevento, and then in Bartolommeo in Galdo, on the top of a mountain. Capri was also visited. The work of colportage in Calabria has been very successful ; so eager were the people for Bibles, that those who had not money brought fowls, eggs—anything they had in payment, often denying themselves articles of clothing and other things that they might obtain the coveted book.

The fall of the temporal power had a favourable effect in raising a spirit of inquiry, the Sunday schools grew in numbers and prosperity by the earnest efforts of Signor Enrico Tron, and the stations gained in numbers and influence. Girgenti and Alberona were visited, and Signor Tron made a tour of inspection in Lecce, which resulted in its being adopted as a field of Waldensian labour. Naples, like Milan, is sadly in need of a suitable church. In dark and superstitious Benevento a beginning has been made, and a place of worship secured after a hard struggle which lasted eight months, the landlord refusing to give up the keys when he found for what purpose the house was required. Reggio di Calabria has had a pastor for two years, and souls are being gathered. There is such a number of beggars here that the evangelist gathered them together by giving a half-penny to each one who came. He was, of course, accused

of buying converts, but he has kept this separate from his ordinary work, and it is very touching to see him surrounded by about forty beggars, all eagerly listening to the Word of life.¹

Across the straits to Sicily we reach the last of the five districts into which Italy is divided. Palermo, the first and the largest of the stations, is in a lovely situation, called the Conca d' Oro, or Golden Shell. Here a converted priest, who had studied at the Theological College at Florence, now preaches the faith which once he destroyed. Mr. Simpson Kay has had the charge of this station, and though he has had much difficulty, owing partly to his being a foreigner, the work has progressed slowly and steadily, while many calls have come to him from other places, which he and his Waldensian colleague have done their best to meet, and they have rejoiced over many becoming true believers. The historical interest of Palermo is great, but the building composed of living stones outvies them all. The usual difficulty as to a place of worship has been felt here, and they are seeking means to purchase the old palace in Via Nuova, which has been offered to them.

One of the towns from which the cry for the gospel came was Catania, at the foot of Mount Etna. In response to the call, Signor Bellecci, an ex-priest, was sent from Palermo, and is still labouring faithfully there. Signor Augusto Malan, whom we have already met with at Pietra Marazzi, was sent to assist him; since then the claims of Messina have prevailed, and Signor Bellecci is again left to carry on the work alone.

¹ We should perhaps mention that this somewhat dangerous experiment was not heard of by the Commission of Evangelization till it had been tried, and had met with great success.

The station at Messina owes its origin under God to Signor Appia, who, after visiting Catania, had set sail from Messina for Naples, but was driven back by stormy weather to the port he had left. Thus necessitated to pass a day or two in Messina, he proposed to Signor Musmeci, an ex-friar, who had been led to embrace the gospel under the influence of Bellecci, to begin evangelistic operations.

There was much need of Divine help in the many difficulties that beset the work. Our dear friend Signor Malan has borne the many trials peculiar to this station, as well as his own private sorrow in the loss of his wife, in a truly Christian spirit. His method of working is shown in the following extracts from his letters:

“The results obtained from our mission far exceed our computations. Our evangelists have accomplished this work by preaching the Lord Jesus Christ and His pure gospel, without polemical violence, or abusive provocation of Rome or her ministers, but by reverent, persevering, humble, loving work.” And again, “Our Church is not composed of persons who had no religious belief, but of those who were religious before, regular attendants at mass, and particularly devoted to some special saint or relic. The religious feelings of these persons were not ruined and destroyed when they came to the knowledge of the truth, and they found, instead, the right way in which to go. Instead of loving the creature, who had done nothing for sinners, they began to love the Lord Jesus who had died for them. The love was not extinguished, it simply changed its object and increased.”

Another peculiarity of this Church is that it is not formed of the lower class only, but is, as it were, a collection of representatives of the different classes of society.

It was not easy to find a place of meeting, and the usual opposition could not be escaped. Now, however, a very commodious temple has been secured, where the audience sometimes amounts to three hundred, and there are one hundred and twelve communicants. A Young Men's Christian Association is to be found here. Dr. Revel visited this place in 1869, and also the other stations in the island, and found much satisfactory work in progress. As an instance of the sacrifices some of the converts have to make that they may walk worthy of the gospel, relinquishing unlawful trades, or those which require them to labour on the Lord's day, we may relate the story of an old couple who kept a sort of *trattoria* or eating-house, selling vermicelli, etc. Their largest sales were on Sunday, but when they applied for admission to the Church they were told that all who professed to believe in the Lord Jesus must be prepared to follow Him fully, in keeping the Lord's day holy, and in doing whatever was according to His will. The test was severe, but they determined to sell no more on Sunday, whatever the consequences might be. Great was their joy to find after a time that their profits had not diminished, but increased; for the people discovered that they could depend on the weight and quality of the goods sold by them, and the shop became a favourite one.

Syracuse is no longer a rich and populous place, but there are some souls who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. When the gospel was first preached here, in accordance with an invitation largely signed, many attended the meetings night after night; but this is too frequently the case to lead to large expectations, and here, as usual, the numbers were gradually reduced, till thirty only remained.

Among those who have been received as communicants is an ex-priest, the companion of Desanctis during his stay at Malta.

Riesi is in the very centre of the island, and the journey thither is by no means an easy one; the evangelist has to cross swollen torrents without bridges, climb hills and mountains, travel where there are no roads, and run the risk of an encounter with brigands. When Signor Augusto Malan visited it he met with a most enthusiastic reception, and the large church of St. Joseph was opened to him, and filled night after night. It was hoped that this church, in accordance with the ready willingness of the syndic, might be secured for evangelical worship, but through the influence of the priests it was denied them, and these same persons have done their utmost to stir up the people against the gospel, but the members have bravely withstood the most vexatious persecutions. A schoolmaster-evangelist has lately been sent to them, who found fifty pupils waiting for him. He has been engaged also in visiting Modica and Licata. Caltanissetta has a little company of believers called together by a royal engineer, who has now left the place, but his influence remains. Trabia has a very flourishing school, for the parents are delighted that their children should learn, though they do not care for the gospel themselves. The inspector of schools visited this place, and afterwards wrote a very flattering letter to Signor Trapani, the evangelist, declaring that this was the best school in the whole district. The last town we can visit bears the same name as the excellent person of whom we have just spoken—Trapani. The congregation is still small, but the work is growing, and the evangelist is not without encouragement.

We have now accomplished our tour, and have seen that there is good reason for the Waldensian Commission of Evangelization to thank God and take courage.

At the Synod held at Torre Pellice in the beginning of September, 1877, the venerable Doctors Robertson, of Edinburgh, and Stewart, of Leghorn, told the deeply moved and attentive audience of their first visit to the Waldensian Synod previous to the year when liberty dawned upon Italy. The minds of the hearers went back with them to the time gone by, comparing the enslaved state in which the Church was kept by a tyrannical Government with the present liberty ; and looking upon the members of the Synod who had assembled from all parts of Italy, Sicily included, they could not refrain from exclaiming, "The Lord hath done great things for us !" There were present in that assembly thirty ordained ministers who had come from the mission-field which the Waldensian Church has been enabled through them to enter and to cultivate. The presence of fifteen deputies from foreign Churches shows that strong sympathy is felt by the various Protestant nations in the work of the resuscitated martyr Churches ; and looking round on the countries of Europe, we see not one, but many of them, which were supposed to be extinct, putting on their spiritual armour for new conflict and new victories.

One of the deputies at the Synod of 1877 was the Rev. J. N. Worsfold, rector of Haddlesey, in Yorkshire. This reminds us that we have one more visit to make before we close our itinerary. In an early chapter of our book¹ the college of the *Barbes* was pictured to us as it existed at Pra

del Tor. Let us indulge ourselves with one more dissolving view. We hear the voice of praise and prayer indeed as it mingles with the music of the stream, which, sparkling, leaps from rock to rock, though the voice does not now proceed from the cavern whence it came before ; but up on



TEMPLE OF PRA DEL TOR, VAL ANGROGNA.

the top of the rock in the glorious sunshine, to which the eye may be directed as the ear catches “the sound of the church-going bell,” is a beautiful little church, to which the members of this Synod adjourned to seek God’s blessing on the minister and his flock who should henceforth meet

within its walls. It is to the patient and long-continued efforts of the Rev. J. N. Worsfold that the inhabitants of Val Angrogna owe this restored temple, in which we trust that the gospel may always be faithfully preached, telling men of free and full pardon of sin, and of deliverance from its power to all those who become the righteousness of God in Christ.



APPENDIX.

A. Page 218.

OATH OF SIBAOU.

Extract from La Rentrée Glorieuse of Henri Arnaud.

Sixteenth Day.—On Sunday, the 1st of September, the Vaudois spent the day at Bobbio and at Sibaoud. Here Monsieur Montoux, the only assistant (ajoint) of Monsieur Arnaud, having placed the door of a house between two rocks, mounted upon it, and preached an excellent sermon from the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Luke xvi. 16. After this sermon the Vaudois continued their assembly for the purpose of making different regulations—the first of which was the taking the oath of fidelity. Monsieur Arnaud read the following formula aloud, at the conclusion of which all took the oath by raising their hands to God.

THE OATH.

God, by His Divine grace, having happily reconducted us to the inheritance of our fathers, there to establish the pure service of our holy religion, by continuing and finishing the great enterprise which this great God of hosts has hitherto conducted so favourably towards us: we, pastors, captains, and other officers, swear and promise before the face of the living God, and upon the damnation of our souls, to observe union and order, and neither to separate nor disunite while God grants us life, even should we have the misfortune to be reduced to three or four; not to parley or treat with our enemies, either Piedmontese or French, without the consent of the whole council of war; to put together the booty we have made, or may make, and to use it for the wants of our people, and on extraordinary occasions. We, soldiers, promise and swear before God, this day, to obey the orders of all our officers, and we swear fidelity to them, even to the last drop of our blood; also, to place the prisoners and booty at their disposal. Further, it is ordered that all officers and soldiers shall be forbidden, under heavy penalties, to search, either during or after any action, any of the dead, wounded, or prisoners, excepting those

officers or soldiers especially appointed for the purpose. The officers are enjoined to see that all the soldiers keep their arms and ammunition in order; and above all to punish very severely any who blaspheme the holy name of God, or swear. And to the intent that union, which is the soul of our affairs, should remain inviolable among us, the officers shall swear fidelity to the soldiers, and the soldiers to the officers, promising together to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to deliver, if possible, our brethren from the cruel woman of Babylon, and with them to re-establish and maintain His kingdom till death, and observe all our lives, with good faith, this present ordinance.

B. Page 231.

A similarity of faith and character between the colonists and the German people, who so cordially welcomed them, has occasioned so complete a union that little vestige can now be traced of the Vaudois settlers, who were established to the west and north of Stuttgart, but the names of some of the villages called after the places of their nativity, and a remnant of the Vaudois *patois* still understood in the more retired districts. In a Swiss periodical we have not at hand to quote from, we remember to have met an interesting letter written by a Vaudois pastor (we believe M. Appia), describing a visit he had paid to this locality, and his entire failure, owing to his ignorance of the language, in making known the object of his research, until some person hit on the happy expedient of fetching a little girl who had come from a more retired part, and whose native *patois* bore sufficient resemblance to that of the Vaudois to enable her to become a very efficient interpreter. The joy of the Vaudois pastor appears to have been very great in the discovery of this undeniable trace of his lost tribe of the "Israel of the Alps."



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